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A HISTORY OF FLORENCE

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FLORENCE
HER HISTORY AND ART
TO THE FALL OF THE REPUBLIC

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PREFACE

THERE are at present three histories of Florence written in English, very dissimilar, but all of considerable merit. Why then, it will naturally be asked, write a fourth? The answer is twofold.

In the first place these three works are for the general reader, unless he wants to make of Florentine history a special study, too lengthy. The scholarly works of Professor Villari, comprising *The Two First Centuries of Florentine History*, *The Life and Times of Savonarola*, and *The Life and Times of Machiavelli*, were first given to the public in eight large volumes. Their number, it is true, by dint of smaller type and thinner paper, has since been reduced, but the text has not been abridged. The student, if he has time, cannot do better than digest them, for they are the product of years of learning and research, and they summarise, with much literary skill, a knowledge which probably no other living individual possesses. Napier's *Florentine History* (1846-7) covers a longer period, and runs into six closely printed volumes. It is a mine of information, but it is written in a singularly unattractive style, and it has no index. Trollope's *History of the Commonwealth of Florence* (1865), on the other hand, will be found pleasant reading enough, especially by those to whom a lightness of treatment, which sometimes verges on flippancy, is not an offence; but it also is lengthy, as it occupies four large volumes.

In the second place all of these works have for the general public a graver defect. As has been well said, "When we look back—when posterity looks back—upon mediæval Italy

and upon Florence, it is of painting and sculpture that we think first: these are the arts in which Italy is for us pre-eminent, and by which, for us, her memory is chiefly ennobled."¹ Now Professor Villari and Trollope barely touch on Florentine Art, and Napier's meagre references to it are quite out of date.

In guide books, of which many excellent ones have been written, no doubt these defects do not exist. They deal mainly with Art, and in some of them no little history is to be found, but it is of necessity presented in a fragmentary form, which constitutes a serious drawback. History when treated in this manner suffers severely, as it is impossible to appreciate the importance or significance of an event when detached from its causes and consequences. Chief among the guides are Horner's delightful *Walks in Florence* and Mr. Edmund Gardner's recently published *Story of Florence*. The latter dainty little volume is, as far as its scope will admit, altogether admirable, but it must be classed with guides rather than histories, for only one-third of it tells the "Story of Florence" chronologically, while the treatment of the subject in the remaining two-thirds is local. In Mrs. Oliphant's deservedly popular *Makers of Florence* the biographical arrangement necessarily renders the history which it contains disjointed.

My aim has been to write a history which shall aid the student who has not time to master the contents of many volumes, and the traveller who, while visiting Florence, desires to take an intelligent interest in what he sees. With this end in view I have endeavoured to tell the story of the political growth and vicissitudes of the city, until the period of its decline, more succinctly than it has been told by previous historians, yet devoting more space to Art and Literature than they have done. I have noticed the æsthetic

¹ Professor Colvin's "Gospel of Labour," *Macmillan's Magazine*, xxxv. 458.

and intellectual achievements, which have made Florence famous, in as close connection with the events that were taking place at the time of their production as I could, without unduly interfering with the sequence of my narrative. Those who will trouble to bear in mind this juxtaposition will find that it vivifies their interest in both History and Art. I am conscious that Art and Literature suffer from a parenthetical mode of treatment, but not so much, it seems to me, as History suffers when treated in the guide-book fashion.

The information contained in the following pages has been collected from various sources, but no attempt has been made to make use of inedited manuscripts. I owe much to the three histories which I have named; I have, however, generally gone for my facts to standard Italian works. My thanks are due to many friends and relations for valuable advice and assistance.

F. A. H.

PAINSWICK HOUSE

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ABBREVIATIONS

EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATED TITLES OF WORKS FRE- QUENTLY REFERRED TO IN THE FOOTNOTES

- ARCH. STOR. *Archivio Storico ossia raccolta di opere e documenti finora inediti o divenuti rarissimi riguardanti la storia d'Italia.* Firenze, 1842 *et seq.*
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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF FLORENTINE ARTISTS AND AUTHORS FROM 1232 TO 1564.

1230 40 50 60 70 80 90 1300 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 1400 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 1500 10 20 30 40

SCULPTORS AND ARCHITECTS.

- Arnolfo di Cambio, 1232-1310.
 Andrea Pisano, *c.* 1270-*c.* 1348.
 Giotto, 1276-1337.
 Orcagna, ? 1308-1368.
- Brunelleschi, 1377-1446.
 Ghiberti, 1378-1455.
 Donatello, 1386-1466.
 Michelozzo Michelozzi, 1391-1472.
 Luca della Robbia, 1400-1482.
 Leon Battista Alberti, 1405-1472.
 Bernardo Rossellino, 1409-1478.
 Antonio Rossellino, 1427-1479.
 Desiderio da Settignano, 1428-1463.
 Antonio Pollaiuolo, 1429-1498.
 Mino da Fiesole, 1432-1484.
 Verrocchio, 1435-1488.
 Benedetto da Majano, 1442-1497.
 Giuliano da San Gallo, 1445-1516.
- Il Cronaca, 1454-1509.
 Antonio da San Gallo, 1455-? 1534.
 Michelangelo, 1476-1564.

PAINTERS.

- Cimabue, 1240-*c.* 1302.
 Giotto, 1276-1337.
 Simone Martini, 1283-1344.
 Taddeo Gaddi, 1300-1366.
 Orcagna, ? 1308-1368.
 Antonio Veneziano, 1309-1386.
 Giotto, 1324-1357.
 Agnolo Gaddi, ? 1333-1396.
 Spinello Aretino, 1334-1410.
 Gherardo Starnina, 1354-1408.
 Masolino, *c.* 1384-? 1447.
- Fra Angelico, 1387-1455.
 Masaccio, 1402-1429.
 Filippo Lippi, ? 1412-1469.
 Benozzo Gozzoli, 1420-1498.
 Perugino, 1446-1524.
 Botticelli, 1447-1510.
 D. Ghirlandajo, 1449-1498.
 Leonardo da Vinci, 1452-1519.
 Filippino Lippi, 1457-1504.
 Lorenzo di Credi, 1459-1537.
 Fra Bartolommeo, 1475-1517.
- Michelangelo, 1476-1564
 Raphael, 1482-1520.
 Andrea del Sarto, 1487-1531.

POETS AND HISTORIANS.

- Cavalcanti, d. 1300. Petrarch, 1304-1374.
 Dante, 1265-1321. Boccaccio, 1313-1375.
 Giovanni Villani, 1275-1348.
- Machiavelli, 1469-1527.
 Ariosto, 1474-1533.
 Guicciardini, 1482-1540.

A HISTORY OF FLORENCE

CHAPTER I

ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY

THE origin of the City of Florence and the derivation of its name are alike involved in obscurity, which a host of conjectures has done but little to dispel. The most probable of these seems to be that given by Villani and accepted by Machiavelli, namely, that the inhabitants of Fiesole, which was a flourishing city in the time of the Etruscans, came down to the banks of the Arno for the purposes of trade. A small settlement thus sprung up at a very early period, on a spot (where the Mugnone runs into the Arno) which the Fiesoleans had used as a market and a port. When this little village, which went by the name of Campo Martis, developed into a town is uncertain, but it is beyond question that at a later period it was rebuilt by the Romans. Traces of walls of Roman workmanship have been discovered, and there is evidence of the existence of a town built on the usual plan of the *Castrum*—a quadrangle traversed by two wide and perfectly straight streets, crossing it in the centre at right angles and dividing it into quarters. Remains have also been found of an amphitheatre in the Via de' Greci, of a theatre in the Via de' Gondi, of a Temple of Isis on the site of San Firenze, and of baths in the street still known as the Via delle Terme.¹ Various surmises have been made as to the date of this rebuilding. It has been assigned to the days of Julius Cæsar,² to those of Sulla,³ and to a yet earlier period.⁴ Without fixing the date,

¹ Villani, i. 67.

² Villani, lib. i. cap. 38.

³ Mommsen.

⁴ There is a statement in Florus' Abridgment of Livy that "Florentia (or, according to an old MS., "Florentina") was one of the four *Municipia Splendidissima* that were sold by Sulla after the Civil War, but it is probable that this passage relates to the town of Ferentino (Napier, i. 13).

Professor Villari thinks that it could not have taken place before B.C. 200.¹ By A.D. 15 Florence had undoubtedly grown into importance, for Tacitus tells us that in that year several Italian towns sent deputations to Rome to oppose a scheme for the prevention of the overflow of the Tiber by turning the waters of its tributary, the Chiana, into the Arno, that was then under the consideration of the Senate. Of these towns Florence was one, and her emissaries were the spokesmen for all.²

The derivation of "Florence" is even more obscure than her origin. According to the legend which attributes the building of Roman Florentia to Julius Cæsar, Catiline came to Fiesole after his conspiracy and routed the Romans at the village of Campo Martis in a battle in which the Consul Fiorinus was killed. Cæsar, to avenge this defeat, destroyed Fiesole, and on the spot where Fiorinus fell built a new city which was called "Fiorenza" in his memory. The most popular and romantic suggestion is that which ascribes the origin of the name to *flores liliorum* on account of the profusion of lilies which grew in the surrounding country—a suggestion which has perhaps gained credence from the fact that the *giglio* is the heraldic emblem of the city.³ The most reasonable surmise seems to be that Florentia (as the city was called in Roman times) is derived from *Fluentia*—a name given to it from its situation at the confluence of the Arno and Mugnone. Other explanations of the origin of the name have been given, but they are too fantastic for notice.

During the first ten centuries of the Christian era the references to Florence in contemporary writings are scanty, and much that has passed as history must be regarded as legend. A few isolated facts may, however, be considered authentic.

At the very beginning of the fifth century the saintly Zenobio (who was afterwards canonised) was consecrated Bishop of Florence. It is said that he lived in the picturesque old tower which stands at the junction of the Via Por San Maria and Via Lambertesca and which is annually decorated with flowers on his festa (May 25th). He is credited with miraculous powers, and a marble column on the north side of the Piazza del Baptisterio marks the spot where a dead elm tree, with which his corpse

¹ Villari, i. 65.

² Possibly an impetus was given to her growth by the road made by C. Flaminius, which crossed the Arno where the Ponte Vecchio now stands.

³ The adoption of this emblem is, however, attributed to the legendary appearance of S. Reparata.

had been accidentally brought into contact, is said to have been resuscitated.¹

In 405 Radagasius led a horde of Goths into Tuscany, and Florence would have fallen into his hands but for the timely arrival of the Roman general, Stilicho.²

Florence was again besieged in 542 by Totila, but on the approach of a relieving force he withdrew towards Siena.³

During the Lombardic occupation of Tuscany (572-774) Florence seems to have relapsed into her original state of dependency, as she is alluded to in documents of the period as a suburb of Fiesole.⁴ With these exceptions, her history up to this date is a blank.

In 786 Charlemagne visited Florence, but the story of his having rebuilt the city and established an independent commune is apocryphal.⁵ It seems probable, however, that there was from some cause or other a turn in the tide of her fortunes about this time, and that she began to regain importance, as in 825 she was one of the eight cities named in the *Constitutiones Otonenses* of the Emperor Lothair as eligible seats for colleges. From this time her prosperity slowly but steadily increased, while that of Fiesole diminished. This was no doubt largely due to their relative geographical positions. The situation of Fiesole makes it difficult of access, while Florence lies on the most direct road between Northern Europe and Rome. This proved increasingly

¹ This miracle is the subject of a picture by Ridolfo Ghirlandajo in the Uffizi. Another miracle attributed to him forms the subject of a bas-relief on an altar in the Duomo by Ghiberti.

² The Florentines attributed their deliverance to the prayers of Zenobio. Radagasius was defeated on October 8th, a day thenceforth dedicated to S. Reparata, a virgin of Cappadocia, who suffered martyrdom during the Decian persecutions, and who was believed to have appeared in the battle with a blood-red banner in her hand bearing the device of a white lily, which from that time became the badge of the city. A new cathedral, dedicated to S. Reparata, is said to have been then built where the present cathedral stands, but the building of this church was really of later date (Villari, i. 68). S. Reparata was regarded as the patron saint of Florence from A.D. 680 to 1298.

³ Villari, i. 69. The destruction of Florence by Totila is mythical.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵ This story was believed by Villani (lib. iii. cap. 1-3). Other statements by him relating to this period must also be rejected, e.g. the fixing by Charlemagne of the limits of the *contado* (the territory outside Florence over which the Commune had jurisdiction) at a radius of three miles, and their extension by Otho, in 955, to a radius of six miles (Villari, i. 71, 72). The building of "the first circuit" of walls has been assigned to the time of Charlemagne (Napier, i. 26; Horner, i. 10), but the date of their erection seems very uncertain.

advantageous to her, commercially and in other ways, as time went on.¹ German emperors sojourned there on their way to coronation at Rome, and popes took refuge within her walls when forced by popular disturbances to fly from the Eternal City. A close relationship with Rome was thus engendered, to which the Guelphic tendencies that Florence afterwards displayed are no doubt partially due. The erection of such a building as the basilica of San Miniato al Monte, which was commenced 1013, affords proof of the prosperity which Florence had then attained.²

The Florentines, like many another pleasure-loving people, were always subject to spasmodic bursts of religious enthusiasm, and one of these manifested itself in the eleventh century. Florence became one of the chief centres of the movement that was then going on in Italy in favour of monastic reform, and the Vallombrosan Order (a reformed branch of the Benedictines) was founded by S. Giovanni Gualberto (1039), Abbot of San Miniato, who died in 1073.³ Before his death, besides the parent institution at Vallombrosa, the new order possessed eleven houses, one of the chief of which was the Convent of S. Salvi, the remains of which may still be seen just outside the walls of Florence.⁴ Gualberto headed a crusade against simony, which was then very prevalent, and his denunciations of Pietro of Pavia (1063), who had purchased the bishopric of Florence, led to serious disturbances. The people sided with the friars, and at the instigation of the bishop an armed attack was made on the Convent of S. Salvi. Pope Alexander II. sent the eloquent San Pier Damiano to Florence as a peace-maker, but he was unable to allay the storm. In spite of the opposition of the Pope the people insisted on settling the matter by an ordeal of fire. Pietro, a Vallombrosan monk,

¹ Villari, i. 73.

² Horner, ii. 374; Reumont's *Tavole*. The west front is later. San Miniato is said to have been an Armenian prince who suffered martyrdom when the Emperor Decius was persecuting the Christians. According to legend, after being beheaded in Florence (A.D. 254) he walked with his head in his hands to his hermitage on the hill, where the church that bears his name now stands, and there gave up the ghost and was buried. An oratory was built on the spot to commemorate the miracle, and when this fell out of repair it was replaced by the present church.

³ For the pretty story of his conversion see Jameson's *Legends of the Monastic Orders*, p. 118. The miracles attributed to S. Gualberto form the subjects of a series of beautiful bas-reliefs by Benedetto da Rovizzano, fragments of which may be seen in the Bargello.

⁴ They are about one mile from the Porta S. Croce.

afterwards known as "Pietro Igneo," was chosen as the representative of the friars. The trial took place on February 13th, 1068, at Settimo, between Florence and Signa, in the presence of an immense concourse of people, and it is alleged that Fra Pietro passed unscathed through the flames. The Pope bowed to the miracle, the Bishop was compelled to resign, and Pietro Igneo received a cardinal's hat.

From A.D. 1076 to 1115 Florence was ruled by Matilda, Countess of Tuscany (daughter of Boniface III., Marquis of Tuscany¹), the staunch supporter of the Popes in the great quarrel with the Emperors concerning Investitures. She was popularly known as "the great Countess," and she was often to be seen on battlefields with a sword at her side. She was so much beloved that after her death mothers frequently christened their daughters *Contessa* or *Tessa*.² Her residence was at Lucca, but she occasionally held court at Florence.

Before her accession Florence must have increased in population, as we find that in 1078, when in consequence of Matilda's alliance with Gregory VII. the city was threatened with a siege by the Emperor, Henry IV., it was necessary to build new walls to protect the suburbs (*borghi*) that had grown up around the city. These walls are generally spoken of as "the second circuit."³ Shortly afterwards there were other signs of the growing strength and prosperity of the city. "In the year 1107," says Villani, "our city of Florence being much increased in population, men and power, determined to extend their outlying territory and to enlarge their jurisdiction, and made war on any

¹ Cities like Pisa that had suffered from the rapacity of her father ranged themselves in consequence on the side of the empire. Hence, perhaps, the Ghibelline tendencies of the Pisans. ² Gino Capponi, i. 11.

³ The city comprised within the first circuit was bounded by the Arno on the south (or more accurately S.S.W.) and, approximately, by the modern streets Tornabuoni and Rondinelli on the west, Cerretani on the north, and Proconsolo (with its continuation to the Arno) on the east.

The city, as enlarged in 1078, may be said to have been bounded by a line running N.E. by N. from the Ponte alla Carraia to the back of the Church of San Lorenzo and thence following (S.E. by S.) the Via de' Pucci and Via di San Egidio to the Via del Fosso, where it turned in a south-westerly direction and followed the Via del Fosso and Via de' Benci to the Ponte alle Grazie. The new Oltrarno quarter was bounded on the north by the river between the Ponte alle Grazie and the Ponte alla Carraia, and by a wall which, starting from the southern end of the last-named bridge, probably followed the line of the Via de' Serragli as far as the Via della Chiesa, when turning east it passed at the back of the Church of Santa Felicità and joined the river somewhere near the south end of the present Ponte alle Grazie (Napier, i. 75; Horner, i. 11). Trollope says that the wall followed the Via Maggio (and not the Via de' Serragli), but this is probably a mistake.

castle or fortress that would not be obedient to them.”¹ This decision, as here suggested, no doubt partly arose from a desire for aggrandisement, but it was almost a matter of necessity. The mountainous country around Florence bristled with castles of feudal barons, mostly of Germanic descent,² who made frequent raids into Florentine territory and impeded the development of Florentine commerce. The first stronghold captured was that of Monte Orlando, belonging to the Counts Cardolinghi, and in the same year (1107) the castle of the Alberti, near Prato, was demolished. This policy was steadily pursued for many years, in spite of ineffectual attempts on the part of the Emperor to check it. In 1113 a force under the Imperial Vicar, one Messer Ruberto, was sent to chastise the insubordinate city, but on hearing of his approach the Florentines sallied forth, and “the said Messer Ruberto was defeated and slain.”³ In this petty warfare the aim of Florence seems to have been the destruction of fortresses, which were at once an offence to her pride and a hindrance to her trade, rather than the extirpation of a foreign aristocracy. She left the owners of the demolished castles in possession of their estates, and (pursuing a policy of more than doubtful expediency) she constrained them to dwell, for at least a part of the year, within her walls. These newcomers, many of whom became leading citizens in their new home, were for the most part of Teutonic origin, with aristocratic traditions and imperial sympathies, and they had little in common with the Florentine burghers, in whose veins ran Latin blood, whose spirit was commercial, and whose principles were democratic. Thus an element of discord was introduced into the civic life of Florence, and seeds were sown from which she reaped many a bitter harvest.

In 1114 Florence suspended her aggressive expeditions to do an act of kindness to a neighbour. She sent a force to protect Pisa against Lucca while the Pisan army was engaged in the Balearic Isles. In gratitude Pisa presented her with the two porphyry columns, which had been taken from the Saracens, that now stand on each side of the eastern gate of the Baptistry.

As will be seen hereafter, Florence repeatedly suffered from fire and flood. The earliest of these devastations of which we

¹ Villani, lib. iv. cap. 25.

² They are often referred to as *Teutonici* in contemporary documents (Villani, l. 106).

³ Villani, lib. iv. cap. 29.

read occurred in the years 1115 and 1117. "In the year of Christ 1115, in the month of May, a great fire broke out in the Borgo Santo Apostolo, and it was so furious that a good part was burnt, to the great loss of the Florentines. . . . And again in the year 1117 another fire broke out, and of a truth what was not burnt in the first fire was burnt in the second."¹ In the latter year the bridge which occupied the position of the present Ponte Vecchio (the only bridge over the Arno in Florence at that time) was swept away by a flood.

Notwithstanding these misfortunes Florence continued to increase in importance, and as she did so the prosperity of the parent city declined. Indeed, by the beginning of the twelfth century Fiesole had become little more than a nest of brigands, who infested Florentine territory. To get rid of this nuisance previous attempts had been made, but it was not till 1125 that Fiesole was captured and finally merged in the *contado fiorentino*.² All of the important buildings, except the cathedral and the citadel, were demolished and their materials removed to Florence, to which city most of the Fiesoleans migrated.³ After this date Fiesole dwindled in size, and in 1228 its population was probably no more than it is at present.⁴

¹ Villani, lib. iv. cap. 30. Villani says that all the city records perished in this fire, but it is doubtful whether any such ever existed.

² Villani gives an account of an earlier taking of Fiesole in the year 1010, but his story is rejected by Villari (vol. i. p. 72). Villari also rejects the details of the capture in 1125 given by Zanzonone as too extravagant for belief (vol. i. p. 115).

³ The beautiful pulpit now in the Church of S. Leonardo in Arcetri at Florence probably formed part of the spoils. Until 1782 it stood in the Church of San Piero Scheraggio (Horner, ii. 420).

⁴ Napier, i. 66.

CHAPTER II

1138-1250

THE BIRTH OF THE COMMONWEALTH—THE BUONDELMONTE
TRAGEDY—GUELPHS AND Ghibellines

NO precise date can be fixed for the birth of the Commonwealth. It was certainly not later than 1138, for a roll of Florentine consuls who held office from that year to 1219 is extant.¹ There are grounds for supposing that it had existed in embryo some seventy years earlier, as letters written by San Pier Damiano during the feud between the Vallombrosan friars and the bishop were addressed *civibus florentinis*, and there are other documents of about the same period in which *clerus et populus florentinus* and *municipale præsidium* are mentioned.² Moreover, from our knowledge of what was taking place in other parts of Italy it may be safely asserted that a popular government was in process of formation in Florence during the period of misrule to which the country was subjected under the incompetent successors of Charlemagne. Berengar vainly attempted to restrain his vassals, and after Otho I. was crowned in Rome in 961 "the two great potentates in the peninsula were an unarmed Pontiff and an absent Emperor. The subsequent history of the Italians shows how they succeeded in reducing both these powers to principles, maintaining the pontifical and imperial ideas, but repelling the practical authority of either potentate."³ This was mainly accomplished by playing off one power against the other, and it was facilitated by Otho's concessions to the Church. By these the unarmed pontiff became in many places more than a match for the absent emperor. In some cities the count (who was the emperor's vicar) and the bishop had co-ordinate jurisdiction, and

¹ It was for a long time believed that Florence was governed by consuls as early as 1102, from an allusion to them of a document which bears that date. It has since been discovered that the 1102 is erroneous, and should be 1182 (Villari, i. 84).

² *Ibid.*, i. 85.

³ Symonds, i. 47.

the people, when bent on resisting the authority of the count, generally found a willing leader in the bishop. After a time the popular party grew strong enough to expel the count, who ensconced himself in some neighbouring stronghold, and, thanks to the permission that had been granted by Berengar to encompass the cities with walls as a protection against the invasions of the Huns, they were generally able to hold him at bay. Thus many an Italian municipality was fostered under the wing of the Church. In some cases the people, for the purpose of enforcing order (which either from neglect or weakness was not maintained by their nominal rulers), acquired powers of which they were not completely dispossessed even when the suzerainty of Italy passed into stronger hands. Special causes, of a local character, were no doubt at work in different places, but the greater part of the peninsula was more or less subject to the same conditions.

From what has been said it seems clear that the rule of Matilda (1076-1115) conduced to the growth of Florentine municipal life. She was herself for a time the leader of a rebellion against the empire. If she did not direct, she at least sanctioned the wars which Florence, for commercial reasons, undertook against the nobles who held their fiefs from the emperor. It is true that during the earlier part of her reign she acted as presiding judge in the Courts of Justice, but she was always aided by assessors chosen from among the principal citizens,¹ and during the last fifteen years of her life she does not seem to have pronounced any legal sentence. All this tends to show that Florence had gradually attained a measure of independence which was real before it was legal.² And although no absolute proof is forthcoming, it does not seem unreasonable to surmise that the men who had commanded garrisons and administered justice in the name of Matilda during her life should, after her death, have ruled the city in the name of the people. Thus it may well be that, without any revolutionary change, a consular form of government was evolved. And "thus Florence, the country of Dante, the country of Michelangelo—Florence, that has played such a grand part in the culture of the world—came unnoticed into being."³

¹ Among them we find such well-known names as Uberti, Donati, Gherardi, and Ughi (Villari, i. 88).

² "Le Origini del Comune di Firenze" (a paper by Professor Villari in *Gli Albori della Vita Italiana*), p. 29.

³ *Gli Albori della Vita Italiana* (Milan, 1897), p. 32.

In the earliest days of which we have any authentic record the government usually comprised twelve consuls,¹ two elected annually by each of the six wards (*sestieri* or *sesti*) into which the city was then divided.² They were chosen exclusively from the *grandi*, as the most prominent citizens (of whom the Uberti were the chief) were called, and they were usually drawn from about four families. Even in these early days of the commonwealth it was practically an aristocratic oligarchy. The consuls declared war, made treaties, administered justice, and carried on all the duties of a responsible executive. Their foreign policy was much the same as that in the Countess Matilda's days. In 1154 the strong castle of Monte Croce, situated between Florence and Arezzo, which belonged to the Counts Guidi, one of the most powerful families in Central Italy, was razed to the ground. Indeed, during all the latter half of the twelfth century Florence was engaged in subjugating feudal barons or making war on neighbouring towns. For one or other of these purposes she was successively in alliance with Prato, Pisa, Siena, and Lucca. She also resorted to another method of extending her influence. Seeing the advantage that Siena had derived from the dependent town of Poggibonsi, Florence founded the little town of Colle, the first of the colonies from which, in later years, she derived valuable support.

In 1177 another serious fire occurred, which is said to have originated in the houses of the Uberti, and to have been the work of the populace, who were jealous of the power which that family had acquired. However this may be, it is certain that serious disturbances commenced at this time. This was the first of that long series of conflicts between the nobles and the people, the records of which fill so many pages of Florentine history. The people were at first successful, and their nominees were elected consuls, but the Uberti ultimately triumphed. The struggle, which lasted for more than two years, at times assumed

¹ It appears from the roll of consuls that their number varied from time to time; but Professor Villari thinks that the names of only the most prominent were mentioned while the number remained unchanged.

² Before the building of the second circuit of walls the city had been divided into quarters. The *sestieri* were called respectively Porta del Duomo, San Piero Maggiore, San Piero Scheraggio, SS. Apostoli, San Pancrazio, and Oltrarno. The church of San Piero Maggiore stood in the Via degli Albizzi, where a single arch still marks its site. That of San Piero Scheraggio stood on a part of the present site of the Uffizi, and it was demolished when that building was erected in 1743. The church of San Pancrazio stood in the Via della Spada, behind the Palazzo Rucellai.

the proportions of civil war.¹ The state of the city was such that it is difficult to understand how civic life could have existed. It had become a congeries of besieged strongholds, from which sallies were made by night and day against the people who had entrenched themselves behind barricades in the streets.² "In pitched battles the combatants have to fear the terrible shock of the adversary, and nothing else. But in this street warfare it was far worse. It was as if a continual shower of rocks and stones was falling from the heavens. Men who lived through those times used to tell how at every hour of the night and day life was equally insecure; how it was doubtful whether it were more necessary to guard your door or your windows and roof; how every man suspected an enemy to be hidden behind the curtains of his bed, or even in it."³ But the citizens became so accustomed to this life of warfare, that "they would fight on one day and eat and drink together on the next, recounting to each other their deeds of valour and prowess; and so at last, from very weariness and fatigue, they left off fighting of their own accord, and peace prevailed; but those accursed factions were engendered in Florence of which we shall afterwards make mention."⁴ This conflict was, however, in truth rather the first grave symptom than the cause of the civil strife of which Florence was for centuries the scene. It is probable that there had been previous disorder on a lesser scale, for the social and structural conditions of the city contemplated and conduced to disturbances. The real cause lay in the differences of race and habits of the old feudal families (the *grandi*) and of the citizens, among whom they were constrained to dwell. The former hated and despised the traders who had destroyed their castles, and they would hold little or no intercourse with them. They were very numerous at this time, and they were divided into associations, that were known as *Consorterie* or *Società delle Torre*. A *Consorteria* was a collection of families who usually bore the same name, and were descended from a common ancestor. Sometimes, however, it comprised two or more smaller families, between whom no relationship existed, who were associated by compact.⁵ The *grandi* retained, as far as possible, their warlike

¹ Villani, lib. v. cap. 9. The historian who writes under the pseudonym of Brunetto Latini says four years, and gives a somewhat different version of the affair.

² Trollope, i. 62. ³ Ammirato, i. 143. ⁴ Villani, lib. v. cap. 9.

⁵ "Le Consorterie nella Storia Fiorentina," p. 116. [An article by Marco

customs. They lived in embattled palaces of solid masonry, that they had built with a view to offensive and defensive operations.¹ These palaces were grouped in clusters around high and strong towers, with which they communicated. Each *Consorteria* possessed a tower, and lived in the houses that immediately surrounded it. In times of disturbance the members of the *Consorterie* retired into their towers, which were from 230 to 270 feet in height, and which were constructed to resist a lengthened attack. In front of some of the larger towers were *loggie*, or covered courts, which were used for festivities and family gatherings. *Famiglie di torre e loggia* became a proverbial expression for families of distinction.² In the year 1200 there were no fewer than seventy-five of these towers in Florence, and thirteen had *loggie* adjoining them.³

The citizen portion of the community, which consisted almost entirely of traders and artisans, was also more or less organised by the middle of the twelfth century. Many of the *Arti*,⁴ as the Trade-guilds were called, which ultimately formed such an important part of the Florentine polity, were already established. Such associations had existed throughout Italy from a very early date, but they developed more perfectly in Florence than elsewhere.⁵ The guild of dressers and dyers of foreign cloth (known as the *Calimala*) must have been rich and powerful in 1150, as in that year they completed the church of San Giovanni, of the fabric of which they had been constituted custodians by the State.⁶ This church, which was for many years the cathedral,

Tabarrini, at pp. 98-127 of *La Vita Italiana nel Trecento*.] For an account of the origin of the *Consorteria*, see pp. 110-114 of the same article.

¹ "Le Consorterie," etc., p. 108. It was remarked by M. Thiers, in 1858, that "Florence had invented the architecture of civil war." *Ibid.*, 109. The remark must, however, have been suggested by buildings of a much later date; e.g., the Strozzi, Medici, and Rucellai palaces.

² "Le Consorterie," etc., p. 116. The *Consorterie* were usually to be found only among the *grandi*, but in 1293 it seems that there were also some among the lower classes. *Ibid.*, 117.

³ Some idea of the appearance of Florence at this time may be formed by those who have seen San Gimignano. The towers were usually known by the name of the families that owned them, but to some the people gave nick-names; e.g., that near the Badia (which was used by the Priors) was called the *Castagna*; that of the Magalotti and Mancini near San Firenze, the *Pulce*; that of the Castellini da Castiglione, near the Mercato Vecchio, the *Lancia*; that near the Bigallo, the *Guardamorto*; that at the foot of the Ponte Vecchio, *del Leone*; and that between the Borgo, SS. Apostoli and the Porta Rossa, the *Basciogatta*.

⁴ These will be subsequently described.

⁵ Villari, i. 232.

⁶ Villari, lib. i. cap. 60.

is now known as the Baptistery. The *Arti* were, in point of organisation, miniature republics, and even at this date it is probable that their governing bodies had acquired some political power.

Thus, even in the infancy of the Republic, the community was divided into two highly organised parties, which were fundamentally different and essentially antagonistic. This is the explanation of the successive feuds which, under various names, almost ceaselessly distracted Florence. They were not occasioned, as is often supposed, by a strong attachment to church or empire, or to a predilection for this or that noble family. These were but accidents which evoked flame from an ever-smouldering fire. Not that all future opposing factions comprised the *grandi* on the one hand and the *popolani* on the other, but the continuous tumults which date from this period generated a spirit of rancour and lawlessness that was active and malignant long after racial differences and class distinctions had disappeared.

The Uberti party seem to have been satisfied with the result of their struggle with the people, for they lent effective assistance to the Commune in their policy of expansion, which was now carried on more briskly than ever.¹ Between 1182 and 1184 the castles of Montegrosoli and Pogna were taken, the powerful Alberti were humbled, a few years later the little town of Semifonte was captured, and by the end of the century almost every hostile fortress within a radius of twenty miles of Florence had been dismantled. But these successes were not obtained without opposition on the part of the empire, for Frederick Barbarossa was not a man to submit passively to encroachments on his authority. He had sent successively Archbishops Reinhold and Christian—both energetic and capable men—to check the growing independence of the Tuscan cities; but they accomplished little. It is true that they established in the country districts and in some cities German representatives of the emperor, who were called *podestà*, but these, having no power at their back, had little, if any, authority. Accordingly, in 1184, Frederick came himself to Italy to endeavour, by his personal influence, to stem the tide of sedition. He came without an army, but he was well received, and nobles and towns formally acknowledged his supremacy. He entered Florence on July 31st, 1185, and while there he received complaints of the surrounding district whose castles had been

¹ Villari, i. 144.

destroyed. It is said that he deprived the city of its jurisdiction over the whole *contado* up to the very walls, and that he treated almost all other Tuscan towns in the same way.¹ Whatever punitive measures he took, Florence offered no opposition to them, foreseeing that they would be but temporary. In this she showed her sagacity, for in 1187 Frederick's successor, Henry VI., restored to her much of the authority over the surrounding district which had been taken from her.

Although Florence had nominally bowed to the authority of Frederick I. and Henry VI., in 1187, she was indisposed to submit to any interference with her affairs by their successors. Accordingly, in 1197, an anti-imperial league of Tuscan cities² was formed, at her instance, with the ostensible object of resisting future aggression, but no doubt with the real object of recovering rights or possessions of which the contracting parties had been previously deprived. Its formation met with the approval of Pope Celestine, but it did not find favour with his successor, Innocent III., because it ignored the claims of the Church to the duchy of Tuscany, and in 1205 it was dissolved.³ As far as Florence is concerned, it had, however, gained its end, for at its dissolution she was practically in possession of much the same *contado* as before Frederick's advent.

Between the years 1200 and 1207 frequent changes were made in the government of Florence, the most important of which was the election of a foreigner as chief magistrate under the title of *podestà*.⁴ There seem to have been officials bearing that title before this time, but their duties were comparatively insignificant, and they were probably nominees of the emperor. The office was first permanently established and incorporated in the constitution in 1207. The change was necessitated by the maladministration of justice by the consuls, who favoured the party that had returned them to office. Hence the obligation that the holder of the new office should be a foreigner, as it was thought that he would not be biased by local or personal considerations. He was debarred from bringing any of his kins-

¹ Villani, lib. v. cap. 12. Professor Villari (vol. i. p. 147) discredits this story.

² The league was formed at Genesis.

³ The duchy of Tuscany had been bequeathed by the Countess Matilda to the Church.

⁴ This office was not peculiar to Florence; indeed, almost every Italian commonwealth had its *podestà*. Many noble Florentines became *podestà* of foreign towns. See Litta's *Colubri Famiglie Italiane*.

men into the city or from holding familiar intercourse with the citizens. He held office for one year, and the same individual was rarely re-elected. The creation of this post must be regarded as a triumph for the *grandi*, especially as the consuls were deprived of much of their authority, and after the year 1212 they were abolished.

The chief administration of civil, criminal, and military affairs was placed in the hands of the *podestà*, and the office became one of great dignity.¹ The first to hold it was Gualfredotto Grasselli, a Milanese, and the old episcopal palace, which had been the seat of the Countess Matilda's government, was allotted to him as an official residence.²

This constitutional reform proved at first beneficial to Florence, both at home and abroad. Street warfare was suppressed for eight years, and foreign campaigns were for a longer period conducted with energy and success. These last, indeed, increased in frequency, and assumed a different character. War was now waged for the extension rather than the protection of commerce.

Troubles from marauding barons were at an end, for by the end of the twelfth century the Florentine *contado* extended almost to the walls of Pistoja, nearly half-way to Pisa and Lucca, and much more than half-way to Arezzo and Siena.³ With extension of territory came also a large increase of mercantile prosperity, and this brought Florence into conflict with her more powerful neighbours. Siena and Pisa were her most frequent antagonists, and the animosities that were now engendered very nearly occasioned the destruction of Florence, and ultimately ruined Pisa. The hostile feelings which Florence entertained towards Siena arose from commercial rivalry, as the two cities were keen competitors for the Roman trade, and both were engaged in financial transactions with the Papal Curia. Of Pisa Florence was jealous on account of the mercantile advantages which that city possessed through its proximity to the sea.

¹ But it could not have been a bed of roses if the following rhyme speaks truly :—

"S' tu ai niuno a chi tu vogli male
Mandallo a Firenze per ufficiale."

Quoted by Biaggi in "La Vita Privata dei Fiorentini," at p. 71 of *La Vita Italiana nel Rinascimento*.

² It stands behind the Baptistery, and is now the Archbishop's palace, but it has been altered and restored out of recognition.

³ Trollope, i. 85.

The account given by early historians of the almost chronic warfare that was going on at this period between neighbouring states is somewhat wearisome. Between 1207 and 1208, and again between 1228 and 1235, Florence was at war with Siena. In the first of these wars the Sienese were defeated at Montaldo, and some thirteen hundred were made prisoners. The second was throughout of a desultory and indecisive character. In 1222 a war broke out between Florence and Pisa, which terminated in a bloody battle near Castel del Bosco, in which the Pisans were completely routed.¹ This was the beginning of hostilities, which only ended with the subjection of Pisa, in 1406. In 1228 the Florentines were engaged in a war with Pistoja, and it is during this war that we first hear of the *carroccio*.² It was "a chariot drawn by oxen with scarlet trappings and surmounted by two lofty poles bearing the great banner of the Republic, swinging its red and white folds on high. Behind, on a smaller car, came the bell, called the *martinella*, to ring out military orders. For some time before a war was proclaimed the *martinella* was attached to the door of Sta. Maria, in the New Market (S. Maria sopra Porta), and rung there to warn both citizens and enemies to make ready for action. The *carroccio* was always surrounded by a guard of picked men; its surrender was considered as the final defeat and humiliation of the army."³ The Florentine *carroccio* was, in time of peace, kept in the church of S. Maria sopra Porta.⁴

During the period of which we have been speaking—while victories were being obtained over the Sienese, the Pisans, and the Pistoians—the streets of Florence were the scene of a fierce and prolonged struggle. Indeed, few things are more remarkable in the history of the Florentines than their successes achieved abroad while their home affairs were bordering on anarchy. The explanation lies in their energy and their patriotism. They grew in wealth and reputation when distracted by feuds that would

¹ This war arose from a fracas between some Florentines and Pisans at Rome. Its origin has, however, been ascribed to a quarrel between the Florentine and Pisan ambassadors (who had been sent to represent their respective cities at the coronation of Frederick II. at Rome) about the possession of a lap-dog which had been promised to both of them by a Roman Cardinal!

² Villani, lib. vi. cap. 5.

³ Villari, l. 177. The *carroccio* had been devised by Heribert, Archbishop of Milan, c. 1037. Milman's *Latin Christianity*, iii. 436.

⁴ This church is now demolished. A part of its site is occupied by the desecrated church of San Biaggio.

have ruined a less hardy race. And Villani, after describing the "accursed parties" into which Florence was divided, adds: "Nevertheless they were all agreed as to the state and well-being of the commonwealth."¹ The faction-fight now going on, which ostensibly originated in a mere family quarrel, was the memorable struggle between the houses of Buondelmonti² and Amidei. In 1215 a brawl occurred at a large dinner party, in the course of which Oddo Arringhi dei Fifanti was stabbed by Buondelmonte de' Buondelmonti. In order to preserve peace between the families a marriage was arranged between Buondelmonte and a niece of Oddo, who belonged to the Amidei family. Before the betrothal ceremony had taken place Aldruda,³ the widow of Forese de' Donati, who was bent on having young Buondelmonte as her son-in-law, called him to her house, and after upbraiding him for allowing himself to be forced into a distasteful marriage (the Amidei lady is said to have been plain), threw open the door of an inner room and showed him her daughter Beatrice, who was a girl of extreme beauty. He became "by the devil's assistance"⁴ desperately enamoured, and on February 10th, the day fixed for his betrothal with Oddo dei Fifanti's niece, and when her family were assembled awaiting his arrival, he publicly betrothed Aldruda's daughter. This was an affront that the pride of the Amidei could not brook, and they called together a large meeting of their friends and relations in the Church of S. Maria sopra Porta, to determine what chastisement should be inflicted on Buondelmonte. It was suggested that he should be beaten or disfigured by wounds in the face, but Mosca de' Lamberti said, "Let him die. What is done is done with" ("Cosa fatto capo ha"),⁵ and his advice was followed. The wedding took place on Easter Sunday, at the Church of S. Felicità

¹ Lib. v. cap. 39. And strangely enough, while war abroad and strife at home were going on, improvements to the city were not neglected. In 1218 the foundations of the Ponte alla Carrala (or Ponte Nuovo as it was then called, to distinguish it from the Ponte Vecchio) were laid, and in 1237 a third bridge over the Arno was built, where the Ponte alle Grazie now stands. It was called Ponte Rubaconte, after the *podestà* who caused it to be built. Both of these bridges were designed by a German, Maestro Jacopo (or Lapo), the architect of the upper and lower churches at Assisi.

² The Buondelmonti settled in Florence after the destruction of their castle in the twelfth century. Their name is said to be derived from Buoni (a contraction of Buonomini) del Monte, "Good men of the mountain."

³ Or Gualdrada.

⁴ Villani, lib. v. cap. 38.

⁵ Mosca de' Lamberti is placed by Dante in the ninth circle of Hell (*Inferno*, canto 28). The Lamberti palaces were near the Mercato Vecchio (Horner, i. 157).

in the Oltrarno, and the bridal party returned across the Ponte Vecchio towards the houses of the Donati.¹ Just as the bridegroom, who was riding on a white palfrey, gaily clad, with a garland on his head, reached the statue of Mars, he was struck from his horse by Schiatta de' Lamberti and despatched by the daggers of Oddo Arringhi and others in front of the house of the lady whom he had jilted. The news of the murder occasioned among all classes much excitement, which was intensified when Buondelmonte's friends carried his corpse through the city, with the head resting on the lap of his affianced bride.² The nobles fortified themselves in the towers, the people threw up barricades across the streets, and before long an internecine war had begun, from which the Guelph and Ghibelline factions in Florence are said to have sprung.³

From what has been already said it will be seen that the seeds of civil discord had been sown long ago; but since the struggle respecting the election of consuls in 1177, the *grandi* had ceased to be a united body. A new aristocracy, who owed no traditional allegiance to the empire, was being gradually formed from out of the wealthy trading classes. Hence, when the quarrel between emperors and popes spread from Germany to Italy, dissensions among the powerful families in Florence arose. Before the occurrence of this domestic tragedy jealousies existed between some of them, notably between the Buondelmonti on the one hand, and the Uberti and Fifanti on the other.⁴ The Buondelmonte catastrophe did but convert latent animosities into open hostilities. Some forty of the leading families sided with the Buondelmonti and, espousing the cause of the pope, called themselves "Guelphs"; while some thirty sided with the Uberti and,

¹ The houses of the Donati were between the Via del Corso and the Church of S. Piero Maggiore (Horner, i. 156).

² Villari, i. 173; Trollope, i. 103. Trollope's version (which I have followed) is taken from *La Toscana illustrata nella sua Storia* (Livorno, 1755), said to have been written by a member of the Buondelmonti family. No other historian states that the marriage between Buondelmonte and Beatrice Donati had taken place. Litta says that it had not.

³ This was certainly the opinion of the old chroniclers, and it seems to have been that of Dante:—

"La casa, di che nacque il vostro feto,
Per lo giusto disegno che v' ha morti,
E posto fine al vostro viver lieto,
Era onorata ed essa e suoi consorti.
O Buondelmonte, quanto mal fuggisti
Le nozze sue per gli altrui conforti!"—*Paradiso*, canto xvi.

⁴ Villari, i. 173.

declaring for the emperor, called themselves "Ghibellines." Villani and Malispini give lists of the most prominent houses that took part in the struggle, from which it is evident that the descendants of the feudal barons became for the most part Ghibelline, and that the Guelphic party included the *nouveaux riches*.¹ The populace attached themselves either to one side or the other, and almost the entire population became infected by the feud.² "Nevertheless it was more from party spirit and sectarianism preconceived, than for caring for either pope or emperor, that the minds of the Florentines were inflamed."³

The names "Gulf" and "Ghibelline" are of German origin, and are said to be the Italianised form of "Welf" and "Waiblingen," which were the war cries at the battle fought at Weinsberg in 1140 between Henry the Proud, of the house of Bavaria, and Conrad III., the first of the Hohenstaufen emperors. Welf was a name borne by many princes of the house of Bavaria (indeed, the family are sometimes referred to as "the Welfs of Altdorf"), and Waiblingen was the name of a castle or village in the diocese of Augsburg, which was the home of the Hohenstaufen. The Welfs had always been staunch allies of the popes, and their name was ultimately used to designate the supporters of the Church. Waiblingen, on the other hand, came to signify those who were attached to the empire. And so, when Frederick Barbarossa was endeavouring to maintain his imperial rights against the Lombard League, between 1167 and 1177, we find these party names appearing in Italy transformed into *Guelfi* and *Ghibellini*.

The struggle which broke out in 1215 was carried on more or less continuously till 1248. The streets of Florence were frequently reeking with blood, but no permanent advantage was gained by either side until the Ghibellines called in foreign aid.

¹ Villani, lib. v. cap. 39; Malispini, cap. 100. Among the names of most frequent occurrence in Florentine history, the Nerli, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Bardi, Mozzi, Gherardini, Foraboschi, Pulci, Magalotti, Sacchetti, Manieri, Cavalcanti, Buondelmonti, Tornaquinci, Scali, Bisdolini, Adimari, Tosinghi, Donati, Cerchi, and della Bella were Guelphs; and the Uberti, Fifiati, Lamberti, Infangati, Guidi, Soldanieri, Gangalandi, and Amidei were Ghibellines. Some families (e.g. the Malispini and Brunelleschi) were divided, and others changed sides from time to time during the course of the contest. The Frescobaldi, though Guelphs, were of Germanic origin. Some of the Guelph families are described as "not of great antiquity, but beginning to be powerful," or "descended recently from merchants," or "beginning to rise in condition, albeit they were merchants."

² Machiavelli, p. 71.

³ Coppo Stefani, ii. 82.

Moreover the strife was at one time complicated and intensified by religious rancour. Certain heretical doctrines, originated by the Albigenses in Provence, and a philosophical scepticism, fostered by Frederick II. at Palermo, had been spreading over the peninsula. The outcome of these opinions was the appearance of the Patarini,¹ who vehemently denounced as false many doctrines of the Church of Rome. This sect found their way to Florence, and by the year 1212 had made a considerable number of converts, especially among the Ghibellines. In order to crush them a branch of the Inquisition was opened, and the Society of the Captains of the Holy Mary was founded by Fra Pietro of Verona (better known as S. Peter Martyr), for the extermination of heretics. He conducted his mission with savage energy, and bloody affrays between his followers and the persecuted sect took place in the streets of Florence. In 1245 "the Captains," robed in white, on more than one occasion attacked and completely routed the Patarini, who were compelled to fly from the city. Columns in the Piazza Santa Felicità and at the Croce al Trebbio mark places where many of them were massacred.²

Five years before these massacres took place the association of the *Misericordia* was established (1240). The origin of this interesting institution is curious. The cloth that had been either manufactured or dressed and dyed in Florence had obtained a great reputation, and large quantities of it were offered for sale at two fairs, one of which was held at the feast of S. Simon and the other at that of S. Martin. At these fairs, which were attended by the richest merchants in Italy, an enormous business was done, and it has been estimated that goods to the value of from 15,000,000 to 16,000,000 florins were sold at each. The delivery of the cloth sold required the services of a large number of porters, who were in the habit of congregating in the piazza adjoining the Baptistery. "Now in that piazza there was a cellar which is believed to have belonged to the Adimari, but inasmuch as it always stood open in consequence of its having been flooded

¹ Their name is sometimes spelt Paterini, and they are said to have been so called from their sufferings. It is more probable that the name is derived from Pataria, a quarter of Milan, where the members of the sect were in the habit of assembling. They were called by different names in different places. Not much is known for certain of their creed, but they were a branch of the Paulicians, who were a sect of the Manichæans.

² Gino Capponi, i. 32.

by the inundations of the Arno,¹ the porters used to take possession of the place, as their refuge from rain and cold while waiting for a job; and they used to have a fire there and play dice when work was slack." There were sometimes seventy or eighty of them there, and the oaths and profane language of which they made use at such times so shocked one Piero di Luca Borsi, who seems to have been a kind of "ganger," that he induced them to agree that anyone using a blasphemous expression should pay a fine of a *crasia*.² Before long these fines amounted to a considerable sum, which Piero persuaded his companions "to expend in providing six litters, one for each ward of the city, and to appoint every week two of their number to each litter for the purpose of carrying poor sick persons or those who had met with accidents to hospitals, or of carrying away those who died suddenly or were killed in the streets. And that was the humble origin of the society which became so celebrated in Florentine history and which has lasted more than six hundred years."³

Although the conflict between Guelphs and Ghibellines in Florence had been hitherto indecisive, outside the city walls the Ghibelline cause was in the ascendant. The efforts of the Emperor Frederick II. to diminish the temporal power of the Church and to re-establish the authority of the Empire had, notwithstanding papal anathemas, been on the whole successful. Innocent IV. had been compelled to fly to France for safety, and the power of the Lombard League had been broken at the Battle of Corte Nuova. In his endeavours to reduce the Tuscan cities to submission, Frederick, in 1246, opened negotiations with the Ghibelline chiefs in Florence. This was the signal for a renewal of hostilities, and from 1247 to 1248 the struggle between the two parties raged with redoubled fury. Every class of the community took part in it, and every occupation but arms ceased. It was not, however, till the arrival of 1,600 Germans under Frederick of Antioch, a natural son of the Emperor, that the Ghibellines succeeded in mastering their opponents.

The final *mêlée* took place early in 1249, when Rustico

¹ This piazza was in the thirteenth century about two feet lower than it is now. Trollope, i. 120, note.

² A *crasia* is now equal to about two-thirds of a penny.

³ Trollope, i. 119, 120. This account is derived from the *Istoria dell' Oratorio e della Venerabile Arciconfraternità della Misericordia, scritta da Pacido Landini*. New edition by Abate Pietro Pillori. Florence, 1843.

Marignolli, the standard-bearer and one of the most valiant of the Guelphs, was slain. Thereupon the party leaders, seeing that further resistance was useless, determined on Candlemas Night (February 2nd) to leave the city. But before doing so, they marched fully armed to the cloister of San Lorenzo, where they buried Marignolli by torchlight in the presence of a crowd of spectators. The ceremony was weirdly impressive, and had rather the appearance of a sacrament—of a solemn vow of vengeance sworn on the body of a dead comrade—than of a mere funeral rite.¹ The victors, not content with the exile of their opponents, pillaged and demolished their houses and the churches which they were in the habit of frequenting. No less than thirty-six mansions were destroyed, including the magnificent home of the Tosinighi, called *Il Palazzo*, as being alone worthy of the name. It stood near the Mercato Vecchio,² and was 172 feet 6 inches high, with a tower 230 feet high.³ A lofty tower belonging to the Adimari family, which was called *Guardamorto*⁴ and stood in the Piazza S. Giovanni, was thrown down; and Villani charges the Ghibellines with having attempted to involve the destruction of the Baptistery in its fall.⁵ He says that, through the intervention of S. John, the tower, manifestly swerving as it fell, came down in the piazza, and that the people marvelled at the miracle.⁶ The escape of this beautiful building was probably due to the precautions that were secretly taken by the great sculptor Niccola Pisano, to whom the execution of this infamous design had been entrusted.⁷

This was the first of that long series of savage reprisals, which for centuries darkened the history of Florence.⁸ Each party, as it triumphed in turn over its rivals, endeavoured to perpetuate its supremacy by driving them into exile, by destroying their houses, and confiscating their property. But nothing is more remarkable in the annals of these internecine contests than the speedy

¹ Villari, i. 182.

² The Mercato Vecchio stood where the Piazza Vittorio Emanuele now stands.

³ Villani, lib. vi. cap. 33.

⁴ So called because it was customary to watch or guard the dead, who were to be buried in the Church of S. Giovanni, for a certain number of hours in a room in this tower. Vasari (1850), i. 65.

⁵ S. Giovanni (the present Baptistery) was the chief church in Florence frequented by the Guelphs, and S. Pietro Scheraggio was the resort of the Ghibellines.

⁶ Villani, lib. vi. cap. 33.

⁷ Villari, i. 183; Vasari (1850), 65. The Baptistery was subsequently restored throughout by Arnolfo di Cambio.

⁸ Villari, i. 183.

resuscitation of the conquered faction. However cruel and extreme the punishment inflicted by the victors, it was never sufficient to effectually crush the vanquished. Nor was this any exception. The rule of the Ghibelline nobles was very oppressive, and the burghers, smarting under their insolence and groaning under increased taxation, soon put an end to it. Many of the Guelf fugitives had taken refuge in the castles of Montevarchi and Capraia in the Val d' Arno, to both of which the Ghibellines laid siege. Capraia was forced by starvation to surrender, but Montevarchi held out; its garrison sallied forth and killed and captured nearly all the assailants. The news of this victory reached Florence on September 20th, 1250, and so inspirited the populace that they at once menaced the government. Large and tumultuous meetings were held, and on October 20th the nobles thought it prudent to retire and fortify themselves in their palaces. The people drove the *podestà* from office and formed a provisional government almost without opposition; and when the news of the death of the Emperor Frederick II. (which occurred on December 13th) reached Florence, the Ghibellines yielded formal submission.

CHAPTER III

1251-1266

IL PRIMO POPOLO—BATTLE OF MONTAPERTI—TRADE GUILDS

ON January 8th, 1251, the exiled Guelphs re-entered Florence, and a new constitution was shortly afterwards established. The office of *podestà* was abolished, but only to be revived the succeeding year. A new officer was appointed, who was called *capitano del popolo*.¹ As his title indicates, he was the chief of the popular party, and he was evidently intended as a counterpoise to the *podestà*. He was placed at the head of the recently organised militia,² and the exercise of certain judicial functions was entrusted to him. Like the *podestà*, he was to be a foreigner, and he was required to bring with him his judges, knights, and war-horses. He resided at first in the *Badia*, and he held office for one year. The banner of the people³ was committed to his charge, and it was his duty to summon assemblies of the people by causing the bell in the Lions Tower to be rung. The *podestà*, however, remained the chief official representative of the Republic in its foreign affairs. He was commander of the regular troops (which consisted mainly of cavalry recruited almost exclusively from the ranks of the *grandi*); and he retained his judicial authority, except in cases of assaults by the nobles on the people, which were decided in the court of the *capitano del popolo*. In order that the dignity of his office might not be impaired by the appointment of the *capitano*, it was resolved to give him an official residence, and for this purpose the splendid palace, which for many years was known as the Bargello, and is now used as a

¹ He was also called "Defender of the Guilds" and "Captain of the Guelphs." Uberto of Lucca was the first captain of the people.

² This militia comprised twenty companies raised in the city and ninety-six raised in the *contado* (one from each parish). Each company was commanded by a *gonfaloniere* (standard-bearer). Villari, i. 189.

³ This banner was half red and half white. That of the Republic bore the *giglio*.

national museum, was built.¹ *Podestà* and *capitano del popolo* had each a General and a Special Council over which they presided, but differently constituted; for the *grandi* were admitted to the councils of the former, while those of the latter were composed only of *popolani*.² In addition to these reforms, twelve elders (*Anziani*) were elected by the people, two from each *sestieri*, who formed a kind of cabinet, and were advised by a Board of twenty-six *Buonomini*. The *Anziani* seem to have had some of the attributes of the consuls of former days, but how far they controlled the *podestà* or *capitano del popolo* is not clear.

This constitution, which was the first really popular government that Florence possessed, has been called *Il Primo Popolo*. It was certainly conceived in no illiberal spirit, and it indicates a desire to allow each of the two great parties, into which the community was divided, a voice in the government. Machiavelli says of it that it laid the foundation of Florentine liberty.³ Nevertheless, it did not promote tranquillity; indeed its form seems to have contemplated civil strife. The appointment of two military officers, of almost equal rank and with a co-ordinate civil jurisdiction, who were by the nature of their positions leaders of opposite factions, was hardly calculated to make for peace.

Il primo popolo, at the outset of its career, carried on the government with some moderation and much success. As signs of the material prosperity of the city about this time, it may be noted that in 1252 the first gold coin was struck⁴ and a fourth bridge over the Arno, the Ponte alla Trinità, was built.⁵ In the same year it was ordered that copies of State documents should be made and preserved. This was the commencement of the valuable *capitoli* which still exist.⁶ These were the times lauded by Dante⁷ when "the citizens of Florence lived soberly,

¹ It was commenced about 1250.

² Villari, i. 189. The *podestà's* General Council comprised 90 and his Special Council 300 members. The *capitano's* General and Special Councils comprised respectively 80 and 220 members. Of one or other of the two latter the *Anziani*, the Guild Consuls, and the Gonfaloniers of Militia were ex-officio members.

³ Machiavelli, p. 72.

⁴ It was a gold florin containing seventy-two grains of twenty-four carat gold, stamped with a figure of S. John on one side and the Florentine lily on the other. It was coined at a mint that stood on that part of the Uffizi which the post-office now occupies. Previously the coinage took place at the old mint (Zecca Vecchia), which stood behind the Church of S. Croce. Napier, i. 602; Horner, i. 337.

⁵ It was a wooden bridge, and built by Lamberto de' Frescobaldi. Horner, i. 490.

⁶ Villari, i. 201.

⁷ *Paradiso*, xv. 97, etc.

on poor food, without extravagance, and in many respects their customs were rude and unmannerly. Both men and women wore clothes of coarse materials, and many wore skins without lining and caps on their heads, and all wore leather boots. The Florentine ladies wore boots without ornaments, and the greatest were contented with one close-fitting gown of scarlet serge or camlet. . . . Such were the habits and customs of the Florentines, but they were true and loyal to each other and to the commonwealth, and while leading a rough and frugal life, they did greater and more virtuous things than are done in our times of luxury and wealth."¹

Beyond compelling the nobles to reduce their towers to fifty *braccia* (nearly 100 feet) in height,² the government did not at once take any measures to repress Ghibellinism.³ But the formation of a league between the Ghibelline cities of Siena, Pisa, and Pistoja occasioned a change of policy.⁴ It was then thought wise to act on the offensive, but when an attack on Pistoja was directed, the Ghibellines refused to take part in the war. Thereupon many of the leading families, including the Uberti and Lamberti, were banished,⁵ and all show of impartiality was abandoned by those in power. The exiles joined the League and hoisted the banner of the Republic, which was then a white lily on a red field, in consequence of which the State banner was changed to a red lily on a white field, and was so continued ever afterwards.⁶

During the next three years (1252-4) the government actively assailed Ghibellinism in many parts of Tuscany. The castle of Montaia and the town of Figline were captured in 1252, and in 1254 Poggibonsi was taken, and a Guelph government was forced on Pistoja, Volterra, and Arezzo. More important still was a convention which was extracted from Pisa whereby Florence obtained valuable mercantile privileges as well as the Castle of

¹ Villani, lib. vi, cap. 69.

² The *braccio* of Florence was 1 foot 11 inches English measure. It was different in other places.

³ The displaced masonry was used for improving the city walls south of the Arno (Villari, l. 191). Before the middle of the thirteenth century there were no houses of importance in the Oltr' Arno, and when Buonacorso Velluti built himself a palace there, he was ridiculed for choosing a situation so remote from Florence.

⁴ Villari, l. 191. Napier (vol. I. p. 213) says they were reduced to 96 feet.

⁵ For how long does not appear. The Uberti were certainly back in Florence in 1258.

⁶ The flag of the people remained as before—half red and half white.

Ripafratta. But before the end of the year the death of the Emperor Conrad IV. occasioned a temporary change in the prospects of the Ghibellines. Manfred, another natural son of Frederick II., was vigorously maintaining the rights of his nephew Conradin to the crown of Naples against Pope Alexander IV., and his successes were causing the Guelphs all over Italy some anxiety. Florence thought it prudent to temporise, and (1255-6) she entered into alliances with Siena and Arezzo. In 1258 Manfred sent a secret envoy to Florence, and a plot was at once concocted in the houses of the Uberti for the overthrow of the government. But before the aid promised by Manfred had arrived the conspiracy was discovered, and the Uberti party were cited to appear before the *podestà*. They not only refused to obey the summons, but they attacked the civic guard. The city companies were then called out, and the Uberti were overpowered. Schiattuzzo Uberti was slain in fight, two other members of the family, Uberto and Mangia, were taken prisoners and executed in the garden adjoining Or San Michele, and the rest of the family, with other leading Ghibellines, fled to Siena. Their palace in the Piazza della Signoria, which stood where Ammanati's Fountain now stands, was utterly destroyed. The very ground it occupied was, in the eyes of the *popolani*, polluted, and a decree was made that no building should ever again be erected upon it.¹ Hence the irregular shape of the Palazzo Vecchio.²

The Florentine refugees at Siena at once commenced scheming for the overthrow of their opponents (1258-60). They chose the famous Farinata degli Uberti as their leader,³ and he headed a deputation to Manfred. They found him, as usual, engaged in a struggle with the pope, and he was unable to spare them more than a hundred horse. Such scant assistance would have been contemptuously declined had not Farinata persuaded his colleagues to accept it, saying that he would lead the German knights into such straits that Manfred would send them more than they wanted.⁴ These were no idle words, for he so contrived a preliminary skirmish that the hundred troopers were

¹ As to the hatred which the people felt for the Uberti see Ammirato, i. 193. He says that they attributed all their ills to that family, specifying the attempt to destroy San Giovanni and excessive taxation. The haughty bearing of the Uberti was also a great cause of offence.

² Perkins questions this. *Tuscan Sculptors*, i. 56.

³ His statue stands outside the Uffizi, facing the Lung' Arno. He died in 1264.

⁴ Villari, i. 206.

routed and their banner captured and trailed in the mud, in consequence of which Manfred sent a body of 800 German cavalry, under Count Giordano of San Severino, to Siena. Farinata and his party, seeing that even when thus reinforced they were not strong enough to attack Florence with any chance of success, determined, if possible, to inveigle the Florentine army into Sienese territory. Emissaries, who pretended that they had been sent by the Sienese Guelphs, were accordingly despatched to Florence, and they informed the *Anziani* at a secret interview that Siena was weary of a Ghibelline rule, and that those who had sent them would for 10,000 florins open the gates of the city to the Florentine forces. The *bona fides* of the messengers never seems to have been suspected. When, however, the proposal for a march on Siena came before the Great Council, although favoured by the people, it met with vehement opposition from the nobles, who foresaw the danger of marching into an enemy's country, and were aware of the superiority of the German cavalry to their own. An angry debate ensued, during which Cece Gheradini was fined 300 lire and threatened with death for venturing to thwart the popular will. His advice and that of the other nobles was disdainfully rejected, and war was declared.

The Florentine army left the city in August. It had drawn recruits from Lucca, Bologna, Perugia, Orvieto, and other Guelph cities, and it must have numbered at least 30,000 foot and 3,000 horse. It was not well organised, and it contained many Ghibellines who had been forcibly compelled to enlist. The invading army encamped around the hill of Montaperti, expecting that, as arranged with the envoys, the gate of S. Vito would be thrown open to them. Instead of this they saw, to their dismay, the Sienese army approaching.¹ The great battle of Montaperti commenced on the morning of September 4th, and lasted all day. The Florentines fought stubbornly, but they lost heart when the Ghibellines, whom they had pressed into the service, deserted. Then a general stampede took place, only the guard of the *carroccio*, commanded by Giovanni Tornaquinci, a veteran of seventy years old, refused to fly, and gallantly held their ground until every man of them was killed. The *carroccio*, the *martinella*,

¹ Just before the army left the city Siena had been solemnly dedicated to the Virgin, with grotesque ceremonies and hysterical eloquence, by one Messer Buonaguida. Ever after it was known as *Civitas Virginis*.

and the banner of Florence were carried in triumph to Siena.¹ Villani estimates the Florentine losses at 2,500 killed and 1,500 prisoners, but they probably largely exceeded those numbers.² The Sienese historians put them at 10,000 killed, 5,000 wounded, and 15,000 taken prisoners, and their own losses at 500. So ended the battle—

“*Che fece l'Arbia colorata in rosso,*”³

and which “destroyed the old popular government of Florence, which had achieved so many victories and had existed for ten years with so much dignity.”⁴ The consternation among the Guelphs when the news of the battle reached Florence was very great. It was evident that resistance to the victorious army would be useless, and on September 13th a large number of Guelph families left their homes, many of whom took up their abode for a time at Lucca.⁵ This exodus of the party occasioned even more misery than that of 1248, for as it was more numerous, and as Ghibellinism was in the ascendant in almost every town in Tuscany, the difficulty of finding new homes was much increased. The Ghibelline army reached Florence on September 16th, when they found the gates standing open and the streets empty. They pillaged the deserted houses of the Guelphs, but few other outrages were perpetrated.⁶ Count Guido Novello was installed *podestà* for two years. He took up his abode in the Communal Palace, and he made a road from it to the city walls, which now bears the name *Via Ghibellina*.

As Count Giordano of San Severino, Manfred's representative in Tuscany, was about to be recalled, it became necessary to take measures for maintaining the ascendancy of the Ghibelline party before his departure. With this object a congress of the leading Tuscan Ghibellines was held at Empoli. The Sienese and Pisan deputies urged that no means would be so effectual for the maintenance of Manfred's authority as the destruction of Florence. This view found favour in the assembly, and it would probably have prevailed but for the courageous opposition of the patriotic Farinata degli Uberti. At the end of a

¹ The two poles now in the cathedral at Siena were for a long time said to be those belonging to this *carroccio*, but modern antiquaries think that they are part of an old one that belonged to Siena.

² Villani, lib. vi. cap. 78; Villari, i. 211.

³ *Inferno*, x. 86.

⁴ Villani, lib. vi. cap. 78.

⁵ Villani gives the names of sixty-five families who left Florence.

⁶ Excepting the shameful desecration of Aldobrandino Ottobuoni's tomb.

speech full of burning indignation, he declared that no such doom should be executed on his native city while he could wield a sword in her defence, and having said this he left the room in anger.¹ His speech had such an effect on the assembly that the project was at once abandoned.

Before quitting Florence (1261) Count Giordano deposed the magistrates, deprived the citizens of many of their privileges,² and firmly established the Ghibellines in power. The government was now ostensibly in the hands of the Ghibelline nobles, but the *podestà*, Count Guido Novello, who succeeded Count Giordano as Manfred's vicar, was little less than absolute ruler.

He retained the two councils, but the *Ansiani* and the office of *capitano del popolo* seem to have been abolished. He persecuted the Guelph party, demolishing their houses and imposing extortionate taxes on such of them as had not fled. Not content with these measures, he made war on Lucca and compelled the government of that city to refuse to allow any Guelph to take refuge within its walls. They were allowed only three days to remove, and after experiencing great hardships they at length found an asylum at Bologna.

A change was now taking place in Italian politics. The designs of the popes to extend their temporal power brought them into collision with those who were striving for municipal independence, and the Church frequently found itself in antagonism to its old supporters, the Guelphs. The two party names were losing their original significations, and implied rather approval of a democratic or of an aristocratic government than adherence to the Church or the Empire. The disturbances in Italy were also aggravated in another way by the policy of the popes, who never scrupled to call in foreign aid to further their ambitious schemes. "And no sooner had they raised a prince to power than they repented and sought to compass his ruin, nor would they consent that any province which their own weakness prevented them from holding should be possessed by another."³

This pernicious policy was initiated by Urban IV., who, in order to break the power of Manfred, invited Charles of Anjou

¹ In spite of his patriotism, Dante has placed him in Hell on account of his unorthodoxy. *Inferno*, canto x. 32.

² Machiavelli says that this was done with little discretion and greatly intensified the hatred of the lower orders towards the Ghibelline party.

³ Machiavelli, p. 50.

to take possession of the Neapolitan throne.¹ Charles was not slow to accept the offer, but before he entered Italy Urban was dead. He arrived in Rome on May 24, 1265, with a thousand men-at-arms, and shortly afterwards he was crowned King of the two Sicilies. His coming inspired the Guelphs all over Italy with fresh hope. Four hundred Florentine refugees at Bologna formed themselves into a troop and took part in the battle of Grandella, near Benevento (1266), where Manfred was slain and his army defeated.² This battle was a turning point in the fortunes of the Ghibellines. The Guelphs in Florence took heart and showed signs of hostility to the dominant faction. Count Guido would have granted them a share in the government but for the opposition of his less prudent followers. So, apprehensive of their growing power, he resorted to a temporising policy, and invited to Florence two knights of a Quixotic order—half religious and half military—that had been recently established at Bologna, the members of which were known as *Frati Gaudenti*.³ These knights, one of whom was a Guelph and the other a Ghibelline, were conjointly appointed to the office of *podestà*, and they nominated a council of thirty-six members, comprising prominent men of both parties and of different classes—Guelphs and Ghibellines, *grandi* and *popolani*—to assist them. This council passed some useful reforms, but it devoted most of its attention to reconstructing the trade guilds, making them highly efficient industrial organisations, and imparting to them a quasi-military character.⁴

These Guilds (*Arti*) now became a most important factor in the Florentine polity; indeed, for more than a century they were the very backbone of the commonwealth. They were divided

¹ The popes ignored the claims of Conradin, the legitimate heir, because his grandfather, Frederick II., and his descendants had been excommunicated. Urban IV. had previously failed in preventing a marriage between Manfred's daughter Constance and Peter, the son of King James of Aragon. From this union sprang the claims of the house of Aragon to the two Sicilies.

² To mark his gratitude, the pope (Urban's successor, Clement IV.) authorised them to bear on their banner his own arms (a red eagle on a white shield with a green dragon in its talons), which, with the addition of a small red Florentine *giglio* placed over the eagle's head, became the arms of the *Parte Guelfa*.

³ They are contemptuously alluded to by Villani, who says (punning on their name) that they thought more of enjoying themselves than of anything else (lib. vii. cap. 13).

⁴ Whether any of the lesser as well as the greater guilds were now reorganised seems doubtful (Villani, i. 233; Napier, i. 270; Machiavelli, p. 74). This was probably done later (Villani, lib. vii. cap. 13).

into Greater and Lesser Guilds — *Arti Maggiori* and *Arti Minori*.¹

The *Arti Maggiori* comprised :—

- (1) The Guild of Judges and Notaries.
(*L'Arte dei Giudici e dei Notai*.)
- (2) The Guild of Dressers and Dyers of Foreign Cloth.
(*L'Arte di Calimala*.)
- (3) The Guild of Cloth Manufacturers.
(*L'Arte della Lana*.)
- (4) The Guild of Silk Manufacturers.
(*L'Arte di Por San Maria*.)
- (5) The Guild of Bankers and Money Changers.
(*L'Arte del Cambio*.)
- (6) The Guild of Doctors and Druggists.
(*L'Arte dei Medici e Speziali*.)
- (7) The Guild of Furriers.
(*L'Arte dei Vajai*.)

According to Villani,² there were at this time only five *Arti Minori*, consisting of (i.) Mercers and Linendrapers (*Baldrigari*), (ii.) Butchers (*Beccari*), (iii.) Shoemakers (*Calzolai*), (iv.) Master Masons and Carpenters (*Maestri di pietre e di legname*), and (v.) Blacksmiths and Ironmongers (*Fabri e Ferraiuoli*). They subsequently numbered fourteen, comprising (1) Butchers (*Beccai*), (2) Shoemakers (*Calzolai*), (3) Tanners (*Galigai*), (4) Masons (*Muratori*), (5) Oil-merchants (*Oliuoli*), (6) Linendrapers (*Linaiuoli*), (7) Locksmiths (*Chiavaiuoli*), (8) Armourers (*Corazzai*), (9) Saddlers (*Coreggiai*), (10) Carpenters (*Legnaiuoli*), (11) Innkeepers (*Albergatori*), (12) Blacksmiths (*Fabbri*), (13) Wine-merchants (*Vinattieri*), (14) Bakers (*Fornai*).³ The Lesser Guilds varied in number and constitution from time to time (e.g. the Butchers, Bakers, and Oil-merchants were associated together

¹ Machiavelli is mistaken in saying (p. 74) that these guilds were now first established. They were in existence before 1204 (Villari, i. 313; Napier, i. 270). Trollope (vol. i. p. 176) has adopted Machiavelli's error.

² Lib. vii. cap. 13.

³ This is the list given by Ammirato (vol. i. p. 291, note) and adopted by Peruzzi (p. 58). Professor Villari substitutes "Salters" for "Oil-merchants." In 1527 the Tanners and Linendrapers were replaced by Hosiers and Hucksters (*Rigattieri*). Varchi, p. 67. There were other small crafts, some of which obtained a great reputation, e.g. wood and stone carvers and wax image makers, which do not seem to have formed themselves into associations (Villari, i. 341).

in one guild), and some of them were occasionally promoted to rank with the Greater Guilds. They had as yet no political importance, but they carried within them the germs of party strife.

At the head of the Greater Guilds in age, wealth, and influence stood the *Calimala*, so called from the street in which its offices were situated.¹ The manufacture of woollen stuffs had been carried on in Italy from an early date, but the Tuscan hillsides being more suitable for vineyards and olive groves than pasture, the supply of home-grown wool was unequal to the demand. To supplement the deficiency the enterprising Florentine merchants bought large quantities of cloth from foreign countries, especially from France, Flanders, Holland, and England.² But these purchased goods were coarse and ill-finished, and neither in make nor colour did they satisfy the refined Florentine taste. Accordingly workshops were established in which they were carded, shaved, milled, pressed, and dyed afresh, and as the wool of which they were made was finer than any that Italy could produce, when thus finished they were superior to home-made materials. This was the nature of the work done by the members of the great *Calimala* Guild. And to such a pitch of perfection did they carry the art of "finishing" that cloth bearing the *Calimala* trade-mark commanded a high price all over Europe, and was often sold at a profit in the country where it had been made. They were also noted for their skill as dyers, and among their finest products was the crimson cloth of which the *lucco* (a hooded cloak worn by Florentine magistrates and legislators) was made.³

The greater guilds had each their own statutes, but their constitution was very similar.⁴ Every six months the heads of the

¹ The derivation (*καλὸς μαλλός*, a white fleece) suggested in Horner (vol. i. p. 150) is too far-fetched for acceptance. The name of the street may have been derived from *calis malus*, a "bad" or "evil lane" (Villari, i. 233). It is remarkable how many of the great families, who took a leading part in public affairs, belonged to this guild. Among others of note were the Acciaiuoli, Alberti, Albizzi, Bardi, Capponi, Cerchi, Peruzzi, Pucci, and Ricci.

² These foreign stuffs, no matter what country they came from, were called *panni Franceschi*. After a time the Florentines established cloth factories in foreign countries, and sent the rough cloth there made to Florence to be dressed and dyed.

³ In 1336 this guild possessed twenty factories, which turned out annually 10,000 pieces of dressed cloth, worth 300,000 gold florins (not far short of half a million pounds sterling present value) (Villani, lib. xi. cap. 94).

⁴ The statutes of the *Arti di Lana* regulated the behaviour of its members out of business hours. They were forbidden to congregate in the streets or make a noise at night (Feruzzi, p. 66).

manufactories and warehouses of each guild met and chose a body of electors, whose duty it was to nominate the chief officials, viz. the consuls, the notary, and the treasurer (*camarlingo*). The consuls managed the affairs of the guild and, with the notary, sat as a tribunal to enforce obedience to the statutes and settle trade disputes. A member who brought any matter relating to his craft before one of the national courts of justice was liable to heavy penalties. There were also two councils (a special council and a general council, usually consisting of not less than twelve and eighteen members respectively), whose duties seem to have been legislative rather than administrative. Vice-consuls were appointed who resided in the larger Italian and other European towns to protect the interests of the guild. Out-going officials were required to give an account of their stewardship to a committee appointed for the purpose, and the cash books of all members were subject to periodical examinations by inspectors. All merchandise and manufactured goods were also examined, and if found deficient in quality or quantity, a penalty was exacted. The *Calimala* Guild required a label to be placed on every piece of cloth put on the market, on which its exact measurement and any imperfections had to be specified. A member transgressing any of the regulations of his guild was fined, and if after warning he refused to pay the fine imposed, he was expelled from the association. As his goods did not then bear the stamp of the guild (which was a certificate that they had been examined and passed) they were practically unmarketable, and so expulsion entailed virtual ruin. The prosperity of the *Calimala* began to decline when in the fifteenth century the exportation of cloth which had not been "fulled"¹ or "barbed, rowed, and shorn"² was prohibited by the English Parliament.

The Guild of Lawyers (*Giudici e Notai*) cannot in strictness be called a trade guild, as it was a society of professional men. For this reason, perhaps, it was viewed with some jealousy by the other guilds, and was not always accorded the same political privileges. But from what has been said, it will be seen that the lawyers were closely connected with the mercantile life of the city through membership of the governing bodies of the other guilds. Their own guild attained great influence and reputation, and it was "considered the parent stem of the whole notarial profession throughout Christendom, inasmuch as the great

¹ 7 Ed. IV. cap 3.

² 3 Hen. VII. cap 11.

masters of that profession have been leaders and members of this guild. Bologna is the fountain of doctors of law, Florence of the doctors of the notariate."¹ Subsequently the consuls of all the guilds (*capitudini*) elected a proconsul, who was always a notary, and was, as it were, the president of a great mercantile federation.

The Association of Clothiers (*Arte della Lana*) was at this time only second in importance to the *Calimala*. The manufacture of woollen stuffs² in Italy is said to have been stimulated by a band of Lombards, who had been exiled to North Germany in 1014, and who there acquired a thorough knowledge of the craft. They formed themselves into a lay order, known as the *Umilitati*, and on their return to their native country, in 1019, they established a cloth factory which was worked by the confraternity until it became a religious order in 1140. They continued, however, to superintend the works which they had founded, and in 1239, at the invitation of the Florentines, they opened a factory at the convent of San Donato a Torre (where the Villa Demidoff now stands), which was removed in 1251 to the church of S. Lucia sul Prato.³ In 1256 they founded the church and convent of the Ognissanti, from which date the manufacture of Florentine cloth advanced with rapid strides, and in course of time the wealth of the *Arte della Lana* exceeded that of the *Calimala*.⁴ But its importance diminished when cloth-making improved in England and the Netherlands. Florentine cloth continued, however, to be largely exported to the East after it had been ousted from the markets of the West. The offices of the guild were situated behind the church of Or San Michele, and adjoined those of the *Calimala*.

L'Arte di Por San Maria, as the Guild of Silk was called from the situation of its headquarters, originally comprised retailers of woollen goods as well as silk dealers and manufacturers; but as the latter industry expanded, its connection with the wool

¹ Goro Dati, cited by Villari, i. 313.

² Woollen stuffs were manufactured in Lucca as early as 846 A.D. Peruzzi, p. 61.

³ Richa, iv. 206; Peruzzi, p. 64.

⁴ At the end of the thirteenth century about 2,380 sacks of English wool, worth some £25,000 to £30,000, were annually sent to Florence, and in 1315 the Florentines purchased wool from no less than 200 English monasteries (Peruzzi, pp. 71-9 and 176). The *Arte della Lana* possessed about 300 shops, and made more than 100,000 pieces of cloth (Villari, lib. ix. cap. 94).

trade ceased.¹ It did not take a prominent position as early as some of the other guilds,² and it was not till the glory of the *Calimala* and the *Arte della Lana* were on the wane that it reached the zenith of its prosperity. In the latter half of the fifteenth century there were no less than eighty-three silk factories in Florence; and Florentine satins, velvets, and gold brocades had an unrivalled reputation all over Europe.

The Guild of Bankers or Moneylenders (*Arte del Cambio*) is the one which history most closely identifies with Florentine enterprise.³ The origin of our present system of banking, which has done so much for the increase of wealth and the advancement of civilisation, is unquestionably due to the long-headed merchants of Florence. Their extensive trade necessitated the establishment of agencies in all the chief centres of commerce, and as it was both of an export and an import character, the offices of Florentine merchants abroad became, as it were, local clearing-houses, and the trouble of payments in specie was largely avoided. Moreover, the perfect organisation of the guilds afforded the agents a comparatively easy means of communicating not only with Florence, but with each other. Hence a system of correspondence throughout the commercial world was established. Florentine merchants were thus placed in a position to make payments on receipt of written orders (*lettere di cambio*) from trustworthy and substantial correspondents; and as they received a profit (*agio*) on the transaction, this gradually became a lucrative branch of their business, and ultimately developed into an independent trade. The success of the Florentine financiers was also largely due to the reputation for ability and integrity which they had earned, but doubtless they owed much to the purity of Florentine coinage, as well as to their close financial relations with Rome. The popes often appointed Florentines who were living abroad to collect tenths and other taxes claimed by the papal curia; and this raised their status, as it caused them to be regarded not merely as merchants, but as the pope's bankers.⁴

¹ Lucca was one of the first Italian towns in which silk was manufactured. There is some evidence that there was a silk factory there in 846 A.D. (Peruzzi, p. 61), but it is usually supposed that the craft was not introduced to Italy from the East before 1148.

² But it was certainly existing in 1204 (Peruzzi, p. 86).

³ It was established before 1204 (Peruzzi, p. 136).

⁴ Peruzzi, p. 169. In 1233 Tuscan bankers were forwarding remittances to Rome from many parts of the world (Villari, i. 330). In 1264 the

The members of the *Arte del Cambio* carried on business in the Mercato Nuovo, where, in 1338, there were about eighty moneychangers' stalls. Accurate records of all transactions were required to be kept, and no one was admitted to the guild who had not served as a probationer. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the most prominent members of the guild had a world-wide reputation. The Bardi, Peruzzi, Acciaiuoli, Pitti, and Medici occupied much the same position that the Rothschilds do now. They frequently made large loans to foreign princes, and Philippe de Commines alleged that our Edward IV. owed his crown to the help of Florentine bankers.¹

The Guild of Doctors and Druggists (*Arte dei Medici e Speziali*) was of less importance than some of the others, but the large amount of drugs and spices that they imported helped to encourage the trade with the Levant. Their offices were situated at the south-east corner of the Mercato Nuovo.

Of the Guild of Furriers (*Arte dei Vajai*) we do not hear much. They imported no less than twenty-two varieties of furs, and ministered to the taste for costly apparel, which the legislature vainly tried to repress. They carried on business in the Via Pelliceria, near the Via Calimala.

Such, in brief, was the nature and constitution of the famous Trade Guilds of Florence. It is obvious that they must have enormously promoted commercial prosperity. But they had also an educational effect which was of political value. The government of all of them was representative, and many members of each guild being required to take part in the administration of its affairs, a vast number of citizens were fitted for public life. This was no doubt a source of strength to the Republic, but it may perhaps have induced that craving for office which had such a disturbing influence on Florentine politics.

The novel feature introduced into the guilds by the reorganisation of 1266 was the assignment of a standard (*gonfalon*) to each of them, and the provision of arms for their members. Thus a kind of militia was formed which could be called out at a

Simonetti, Bacarelli, Ardinghi, Spinelli, and other Florentine firms were collecting for the pope in London, and in the next century the Spini, Mozzi, Bardi, Peruzzi, Acciaiuoli, and Alberti of Florence were at different times his London agents (*Calendar of Papal Registers*, i. 395, 598-604, and ii. 567).

¹ Edward III. would hardly have been in a position to have won Cressy without the enormous sums which Florentine bankers had advanced to him during the early years of his war with France.

moment's notice in the interests of the middle classes, and a formidable weapon was placed in the hands of the Guelph party.¹ The *Arte di Calimala* took a leading part in the reformation of the guilds, and the proceedings which led to the overthrow of the Ghibelline rule were held in its offices.

These reforms were not allowed to pass without opposition, but it was of a feeble character. The Lamberti and their followers, shouting, "Where are those thieves, the Thirty-six, that we may cut them to pieces" drove the Thirty-six from the Council Chamber.² The people, whom excessive taxation had made discontented with the Ghibelline rule, at once flew to arms and barricaded the streets. Count Guido Novello endeavoured to restore order, but his cavalry were received with a shower of missiles from the windows and housetops, and losing heart he sounded a retreat.

On November 11th he had some 1,500 troops under his command, and hardly a blow had been struck, but in a panic he left the city under the protection of three members of the Thirty-six, and with all his forces withdrew to Prato. On the following day he realised his mistake and marched back to Florence, but he found the city gates closed against him. He made no further attempt to recover the city; the Ghibellines who were with him dispersed, and betook themselves to fortresses in the *contado*, and their party never regained ascendancy in Florence.³

¹ It was probably in consequence of this change that we now find the guild consuls called *capitadini*. On each *gonfalon* were the arms of the guilds, viz. :—(1) The Notaries, one gold star on a blue field (? four blue stars on a gold field); (2) *Calimala*, a gold eagle perching on a white bale of wool on a red field; (3) Cloth Manufacturers, a white lamb bearing a banner (Agnus Dei) on a red field; (4) *Por San Maria*, a red doorway on a white field; (5) Bankers, a red field sown with gold florins; (6) Doctors and Druggists, the Madonna and Child on a red field; (7) Furriers, an Agnus Dei in the corner of a blue field, vair. See Villani, lib. vii. cap. 13, Horner, ii., Appendix, and Gino Capponi, i. 58.

² Villani, lib. vii. cap. 14.

³ Villari, i. 223.

CHAPTER IV

1267-1299

THE PARTE GUELFA—THE FIRST SIGNORY—BATTLE OF CAMPALDINO—ORDINAMENTI DELLA GIUSTOZIA—ART AND LITERATURE IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

THE chiefs of the faction that had effected the expulsion of Count Guido Novello, in 1267 formed a provisional government, and immediate steps were taken for allaying party strife. They dismissed the two *Frati Gaudenti*, they obtained a *podestà* and *capitano del popolo* from Orvieto, they recalled all exiles—both Guelphs who had been expelled six years ago and the Ghibelline nobles who had left with Count Guido—and they arranged marriages between some of the leading families of the two parties.¹ But to the Guelphs who now returned, many of whom had been embittered by banishment or by the loss of relatives at Montaperti, this policy of conciliation was displeasing, and they soon put an end to it. They secretly requested Charles of Anjou to aid them in repressing their opponents, and he sent Guy de Montfort² and 800 French horsemen, who entered Florence on Easter Day, 1267. The Ghibellines had got wind of his coming, and they knew well what was in store for them. The part which they had been playing with the aid of Guido Novello and his 800 Germans was now to be played by the Guelphs and 800 Frenchmen, under Guy de Montfort. So feeling unequal to resist, they quietly left Florence on the eve of the day on which the French troops entered it.³

¹ Among others between the Adimari and Ubaldini, the Cavalcanti and Uberti, and the Donati and Uberti.

² He was son of Simon de Montfort, and after his father's overthrow and death at the battle of Evesham he escaped to Italy: He subsequently became notorious through murdering his cousin, Henry of Cornwall, in a church at Viterbo, in order, as he said, to avenge the death of his father. According to Villari (vol. i. p. 224), it was Philip de Montfort who was sent with 800 horse, but both Villani and Ammirato say that it was Guy.

³ Trollope, i. 179.

The Guelphs were now masters of the situation, and they might have retained the government entirely in their own hands had they had more confidence in themselves. But in a moment of unnecessary apprehension they followed the evil example that had been set them by their rivals, and invited Charles of Anjou (whom Clement IV. had appointed Vicar of Tuscany¹) to accept the lordship of Florence, which, after a show of reluctance, he consented to do for a period of ten years. He did not reside much in Florence, but usually governed by a deputy, whom the people submissively chose as *podestà*, when Charles himself did not hold the office. He also nominated a council of twelve *Buonomini* to assist the *podestà*, and he occasionally chose the *capitano del popolo*. Beyond this he does not seem to have interfered much with the internal affairs of the city, for it was during his protectorate that a new constitution was evolved.

This government resembled that of 1250, inasmuch as it comprised the twelve *Buonomini*, the Special and General Councils of both the *capitano del popolo* and the *podestà*. As before, the councils of the *capitano* consisted entirely of *popolani* (who were now required to be Guelphs), while those of the *podestà* included some of the *grandi*, and the number of members in each council was unchanged. It differed from the *primo popolo*, however, in some respects. The "Thirty-six" were superseded by a council of One Hundred (taken exclusively from the *popolani*), the *capitano del popolo* now took precedence of the *podestà* (doubtless a device to restrict Charles' authority), and the consuls of the *Arti Maggiori* were given a larger share in the government.² The government was now almost entirely in the hands of the Guelphs, but they were still unsatisfied. The desire for pacification, which had been displayed in the previous year, had given place to a rancorous party spirit, which aimed, not merely at the further repression, but at the complete extinction of the Ghibellines. With this end in view a society called the *Parte Guelfa* was established, which is one of the most singular institutions that ever formed part of any polity. The only modern associa-

¹ The popes still claimed a suzerainty over Tuscany by virtue of the Countess Matilda's bequest.

² This is the account given by Villani, lib. vii. cap. 16, but the descriptions of this government by other historians differ (see Villani, i. 226). After a measure had passed the Hundred it was submitted to the consuls of the *Arti Maggiori* for consideration, and then sent to the councils of the *capitano del popolo*. If approved by them it was then passed on to the councils of the *podestà*, with whom were associated the consuls of the *Arti Maggiori*.

tion to which it bears even a faint resemblance is that of the Tammany Ring at New York, but its methods were, of course, different. In the thirteenth century violence, banishment, and spoliation were more effectual instruments than bribery and corruption. Its constitution was as follows. It consisted of six chief officers, who were at first called "Consuls of the Knights," but subsequently "Captains" (*Capitadini*), three of whom were taken from the *grandi* and three from the *popolani*, a Special Council of Fourteen, and a General Council of Thirty-six members.¹ The captains held office for two months, and they met in the church of S. Maria sopra Porta. The duties of the *Parte Guelfa* were nominally to watch over the interests of the Guelph cause, or, in other words, to persistently and systematically persecute the Ghibellines by excluding them from all public offices, confiscating their property, and driving them into exile. They acted with so much ability and zeal, and contrived so completely to control the elections, "that at last the ruling spirit among the captains was the virtual ruler of Florence."² This society exercised a more or less pernicious influence on Florentine affairs for about two centuries,³ and at times the tremendous powers that it had acquired for party purposes were used merely for the gratification of personal hatred.

One of the first acts of the chiefs of the *Parte* was to obtain a list of all losses that Guelphs had sustained between the years 1260 and 1266, which according to this return amounted to the enormous sum of 13,216,084 *lire*.⁴ Partly for the purpose of making restitution to the sufferers, during 1268 and 1269 no less than 3,000 Ghibellines were condemned as contumacious, and their possessions confiscated. The property so acquired was divided into three parts, one of which was paid away in compensation, one was given to the State, and one was retained by the *Parte*. As time went on, however, the whole of the proceeds of confiscations found its way into the purse of the *Parte*, which thus amassed great wealth. Cardinal Ottaviano degli Ubaldini was a true prophet when he said, "Now that the Guelphs have formed a fund in Florence, the Ghibellines will never return there."⁵

¹ Villari, i. 230. By whom these officials were chosen is not clear. Napier's account of the constitution of the society is different (vol. i. p. 278). It was established under the advice of Pope Clement IV. and Charles of Anjou.

² Villari, i. 231.

³ It was dissolved about 1471.

⁴ Villari, i. 229.

⁵ Villani, lib. vii. cap. 17.

Nor were the efforts of the Guelphs to crush their opponents confined to Florence. With the aid of the French cavalry the exiled Ghibellines were hunted from place to place. They were dislodged from castles in the neighbourhood, and towns in which they had taken refuge were attacked and compelled to eject them.¹ And when the defeat of Conradin² by Charles of Anjou at Tagliacozzo on August 23rd, 1268, had dispirited the Ghibellines all over Italy, Florence determined to fly at yet higher game and, if possible, to avenge the battle of Montaperti. Lucca, Pistoja, Volterra, Prato, San Gimignano and Colle joined her in forming a Guelphic league, while Siena and Pisa alone remained of the opposite faction. War was accordingly declared, and on June 17th, 1269, the Sienese army was completely defeated near Colle, their general was slain, and Siena was forced to expel all Ghibellines who had found an asylum within her walls.³ In the following year a successful raid was made into Pisan territory, after which the ascendancy of the Guelphs in Tuscany was virtually complete.

The position of Charles of Anjou was now (1272) formidable. He was firmly established on the throne of Naples, he had vanquished the Tuscan Ghibellines, and it looked much as if his manifest desire to become King of Italy would be realised. That was a consummation which neither of his allies had any intention of furthering, and a change in their attitude towards him consequently occurred. The Florentines required him to appoint an Italian *podestà* (as provided by their Constitution), and Pope Gregory X. offered to mediate between the Guelphs and Ghibellines in Florence, with a view to rescuing the latter from extinction and keeping alive an opposition to Charles' authority.⁴ Gregory's offer was accepted by the Florentines with readiness, not merely because they desired to aid him in his new policy, but because there was a growing apprehensiveness that the Guelph *grandi* were becoming too powerful. A marked

¹ These expeditions cost 72,000 lire.

² Conradin, the grandson of Frederick II., was the last of the Suabian line. After the death of his uncle Manfred, though but a youth of sixteen, he led an army into Italy in support of his claims to the Two Sicilies and the empire. He was taken prisoner at Tagliacozzo, and most unwarrantably put to death by Charles of Anjou with the sanction of the pope.

³ Villani, lib. vii. cap. 31.

⁴ With the same object in view he urged the Germans to elect Rudolf of Hapsburg King of the Romans in order to put an end to the Imperial Interregnum.

change had taken place in the character and relative strength of Florentine factions. The power of the nobles, who were for the most part Ghibellines, was well-nigh broken, and the racial differences between the Teutonic barons and the Latin burghers had been diminished by intermarriages. The wealthy merchants, who were making their influence felt at the beginning of the century, had waxed yet stronger and were now the predominant party. An aristocracy had, in fact, been supplanted by a plutocracy. And the commercial prosperity by which this had been occasioned was rapidly improving the position of the retail traders and artificers. The struggle between the *grandi*¹ and *popolani* was over for the present; the impending struggle was one between *grandi* and *grandi*; and looming in the distance was one between the *popolo grasso* ("well-to-do people," as the new aristocracy was called) and the *popolo minuto* (the "lower," or perhaps more strictly the "lower middle class").² The two latter parties were approximately identical with the *Arti Maggiori* and *Arti Minori*, between whom conflicting interests, as will be shortly seen, engendered much jealousy and political antagonism.

In June, 1273, Pope Gregory X., who was on his way to attend a council at Lyons, came to Florence and endeavoured by the aid of an impressive ceremonial to heal the breach between the two parties. He was attended by the Emperor Baldwin and a suite of cardinals and barons, and also by Charles of Anjou, with whom he was still outwardly on friendly terms. He took up his residence in the palace of the Mozzi, one of the families who had recently acquired great wealth by trade.³ On July 2nd large platforms were erected on the sandy bed of the Arno (which was running very low, as was often the case at this time of year) near the Ponte Rubaconte (now alle Grazie), and on these the Pope, with his cardinals and the King and the Emperor, sat in state, and peace between Guelphs and Ghibellines was solemnly proclaimed in the presence of a great concourse of

¹ There is henceforth occasionally some confusion in the use of the word *grandi*. It is sometimes applied to the remnant of the old nobles, and sometimes to the *popolani grassi*. These two classes, in spite of intermarriages, never completely amalgamated, and we find jealousies between them more than a century later.

² The *popolo minuto* only included such of the shopkeepers, artisans, etc., as were enfranchised. Beneath them were the plebs (or *ciompi*, as they were afterwards called), who had no civic rights.

³ They were at this time the papal bankers. Their palace stood at the end of the Via de' Bardi.

people. Representatives of the two parties were required to attend and to kiss each other on the mouth and to enter into recognizances for obedience to the Pope's mandate, and all who disobeyed were threatened with excommunication. But within four days the Ghibellines fled from Florence, in consequence, it is said, of a secret intimation from Charles that if they remained they would be cut to pieces. The Pope, who had intended passing the summer at Florence, immediately quitted it in high dudgeon and placed the city under an interdict.¹ Hatred between Guelph and Ghibelline was in truth a disease too deep-seated to yield to any external remedies such as intervention or authority, even when acidified with spiritual anathemas, and so the Guelphs, in defiance of the Pope, continued, with King Charles' aid, to persecute the Ghibellines in the surrounding country. It was not long, however, before they lost Charles' assistance, for his lordship of Florence expired in 1277, and the coolness which had existed between him and the Church during the papacy of Gregory X. became an open rupture after the election of Nicholas III.,² who compelled him to resign his office of Vicar of Tuscany. Charles' removal must have been a source of satisfaction to many Florentines, but it did not promote tranquillity. "The Guelph *grandi* (1278), resting on their laurels won in foreign wars, and fattening on the goods of the banished Ghibellines and on gains from other sources, began through pride and envy to quarrel among themselves, whence arose much disturbance in Florence, and many bloody and mortal feuds."³ The chief contest (1279) was between the Adimari on one side and the Tosinghi Donati, and Pazzi on the other,⁴ and almost the whole city took

¹ When he returned from Lyons at the end of the year the Arno was swollen, and he could not cross it except by one of the Florentine bridges. As it was impossible for a pope to enter a city that was under the ban of the Church, the interdict was suspended while he traversed its streets.

² Gregory X. died in December, 1275, and during the next seventeen months three popes, viz. Innocent V., Adrian V., and John XXI., were successively elected and died. In 1277 Cardinal Gian Gaetano, a member of the Orsini family, was elected and assumed the name of Nicholas III. He has been placed by Dante in hell on account of his nepotism (*Inf.*, xix. 67-72), but he aimed at more than the aggrandisement of his family, and before his death the papal states were increased by Romagna and the exarchate of Ravenna.

³ Villani, lib. vii. cap. 56.

⁴ The Adimari were one of the leading Guelph families and held a prominent position in the fifteenth century. Their houses occupied a considerable portion of the north-east end of the present Via Calzaiooli. The Pazzi, two hundred years later, were only second in wealth and influence to the Medici. One of their palaces was the splendid building now known as the

part in the strife. It is not unlikely that these quarrels were fomented by Charles of Anjou in order that the city might feel the need of his rule.¹ But if so, he was out in his calculations, as the Florentines, instead of turning to him in their troubles, sought the good offices of his arch enemy, the Pope. The Guelph captains represented to Nicholas III. that their party was in danger of being broken up, and at the same time the Ghibelline exiles prayed him to enforce the pacification ordained by Gregory X. Nicholas at once despatched his legate, Cardinal Latino, who entered Florence with three hundred horsemen on October 8th, 1279,² and was honourably received, a procession headed by the *carroccio* (a most unusual compliment) being sent out to meet him. He was a Dominican, so took up his abode with the friars of his order at their convent in the Piazza S. Maria Novella, and ten days after his arrival he laid the foundation stone of the beautiful church from which that piazza takes its name. A parliament was assembled in front of the convent, and plenary powers were conferred on the cardinal to enable him to execute his mission.

His endeavours to suppress family feuds were on the whole successful. Intermarriages were arranged among members of the Adimari, Pazzi, Donati, and Tosinghi families, but some of the Buondelmonti refused alliances with the Uberti, and were in consequence excommunicated and banished. The reconciliation between Guelphs and Ghibellines was a more difficult matter. The exiled Ghibellines were recalled, and restitution for their losses was ordered to be made. All statutes tending to perpetuate strife were repealed, and all associations formed by one party for the purpose of injuring the other were declared illegal. An elaborate agreement embodying these and other pacific provisions was drawn up, and substantial guarantees were given by both parties for its performance. On January 18th, 1280, another solemn farce was enacted on the same spot and with much the same ceremony as that of 1273, and with but little better results. "A noble speech" was delivered by the cardinal, who was a great orator, kisses of peace were exchanged, and the agreement was publicly ratified, but the greater part of it remained a dead letter. The Ghibellines were indeed allowed for a time to

Palazzo Quaratesi (rebuilt after the Pazzi conspiracy). This is one of the few old Florentine families that is still flourishing. ¹ Ammirato i., 280.

² Villari, i. 260. Villani (lib. vii. cap. 56) gives 1278 as the date.

continue in Florence, but they never received the promised indemnity, and the *Parte Guelfa*, despite its want of legal status, flourished like a green bay tree. One reform effected by the cardinal would have been beneficial had it been allowed a fair trial. He raised the number of *Buonomini* to fourteen, and insisted that eight of them should be Guelphs and six Ghibellines; but the Guelph captains were too strong, and their animosity to their opponents was too virulent to allow them to rest satisfied with any such arrangement, and before two years were out they had contrived to frustrate it. This they effected by a modification of the Constitution—a radical measure which they would hardly have been able to pass but for a change that had taken place in the papal policy. The Italian Popes Gregory X. and Nicholas III. had laboured to assuage the feuds which distracted their country, but Nicholas died in 1280, and he was succeeded in the following year by a Frenchman, Martin IV., who soon became a mere instrument in the hands of Charles of Anjou. The influence of the Church was now wholly anti-Ghibelline, and the Florentine Guelphs knew that they might ignore Cardinal Latino's convention with impunity. Moreover, they were favoured by other circumstances. Although they regarded Charles as a friend, and were willing to enlist his support when in need, they did not, when in prosperity, desire that he should actively interfere with Florentine affairs. Now it is more than probable that at this juncture Charles would have taken steps to regain his supremacy in Tuscany, had not his tyrannous rule in Sicily provoked an insurrection which kept him fully occupied during the remainder of his life.¹ The Ghibellines had therefore nothing to hope from external aid, and the Guelphs had nothing to fear from the intervention of either friend or foe.

Larger powers were conferred on both *podestà* and *capitano del popolo* now that their election was uncontrolled, and an armed force, 1,000 strong, was placed at their disposal for the purpose of maintaining their authority. The *grandi* were compelled to swear obedience to the laws and to give security for their good conduct towards the people. But the most important of the constitutional reforms now introduced was the substitution of six priors for the fourteen *Buonomini*. The main object of this

¹ The Sicilian Vespers occurred on March 30th, 1282. Charles died in 1285.

change was no doubt the elimination of the Ghibelline element from the Government, but it should be added that the council of "the Fourteen," though equitably constituted, had, through the antagonism of its component parts, proved an unworkable machine.¹ As in 1266, the *Calimala* Guild now took the lead, and at its instance three new officials were appointed in June, 1282, called "Priors of the Arts" (*Priori dell' Arti*),² one of whom was elected by themselves, one by the Guild of Wool, and one by the Bankers. In the following August three more (viz. the Silk Manufacturers, the Doctors, and the Furriers) were each empowered to elect a prior, and the number of priors was thus increased to six, who respectively represented the six *sestieri* into which the city was divided.³ Five of the Lesser Guilds were subsequently added to the electorate, but the number of priors remained for some time the same. At first the priors sat with the *Buonomini*, but before long the latter body was abolished. The priors held office for two months, at the end of which time, in conjunction with the consuls of the privileged guilds and certain other electors, they nominated their successors.⁴ The elections were held in the church of S. Piero Scheraggio. The first official residence of the priors was a house that formed part of the Badia⁵ (which had been previously used for meetings by both the *Anziani* and the *Buonomini*), and there—to keep them as free as possible from outside influences—they were required, during their term of office, to spend day and night. They were collectively known as the Signory (*Signoria*), and, with the *capitano del popolo*, it was their duty "to control important and weighty affairs of State, to summon and conduct council meetings, and to make regulations."⁶ The supreme government of the State was thus thrown into the hands of the trading classes, as none but members of the privileged guilds were eligible for

¹ Villani, lib. vii. cap. 79.

² So called, according to Villani (lib. i. cap. 79), from Christ's words to His disciples, "Vos estis priores."

³ For the reasons of the exclusion of the Lawyers, see *ante*, p. 33.

⁴ Villani, lib. vii. cap. 79. The additional electors are merely mentioned as *arroti*.

⁵ This residence was first known as the *Bocca di Ferro*, afterwards as the *Torre della Castagna*, and still later as the *Torre di Dante*, because it overlooked the house where Dante was born. It was also the official residence of the *podestà* until 1261, when he removed to the Bargello. The priors moved from the Badia to one of the houses of the Cerchi, in the Via Condotta, before they finally took up their abode in the Palazzo Vecchio.

⁶ Villani, lib. vii. cap. 79.

the office of prior. But the nobles were not as yet irretrievably disfranchised, as those of them who desired to take part in the administration of public affairs were allowed to enrol their names on the books of the guilds.¹

The new government did its work well at first and gave general satisfaction. The festival of S. John, always an occasion of merriment, was in 1283 observed with more rejoicing and ceremonial than usual. Members of the Rossi family and their friends, amounting to about a thousand persons, dressed all in white, under a leader called the "Lord of Love," paraded the streets and gave a succession of performances, which lasted for two months, and to which all strangers of note were invited. About this time, Villani assures us² that the citizens of Florence were happier than they had ever been before; but, he adds, their happiness only lasted till 1284, when strife between the people and the nobles broke out, followed shortly afterwards by the *Bianchi* and *Neri* feud. And in a later portion of his history³ he gives some curious and interesting statistics relating to the city in 1280. In the course of the year duty was paid at the city gates on 60,000 sheep and lambs, on 20,000 goats, on 4,000 oxen and calves, and on 550,000 barrels of wine.⁴ And in the month of July 4,000 loads of melons were admitted through the Porta S. Frediano.⁵

The prosperity of Florence at this time (1284) showed itself in the necessity for a further enlargement of the city boundaries, and new walls enclosing all the populous suburbs were commenced under the superintendence of Arnolfo di Cambio. These walls were known as the "third" or "last circuit" (*ultima cerchia*), and the area they included was four times as large as that contained within the second circuit.⁶ The greater part of them was destroyed when Florence was capital of Italy (1863-71), but a few portions, as well as some of the old gates (which

¹ No doubt it was foreseen that before long this indulgence would be withdrawn, as about this time some of the nobles changed their names. Branches of the *Tornaquinci* family assumed the names of *Popoleschi*, *Tornabuoni*, *Giachinotti*, *Cardinali*, and *Marabottini*; some of the *Cavalcanti* became *Malatesti* and *Ciampoli*; and some of the *Importuni* became *Cambi* (Ammirato, i. 293).

² Villani, lib. vii. cap. 89.

³ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 94.

⁴ These measures (*cogna*) contained ten barrels of ordinary size.

⁵ This gate was also called Porta Verzala (verdure), probably from the number of market gardens immediately outside it.

⁶ The population at this time was probably between 70,000 and 80,000 (Trollope, i. 39).

enable us approximately to trace the position of the walls), still remain.¹

We must now glance at a war between two neighbouring states in which Florence became involved. For many years past there had been enmity between the two great seaports of Pisa and Genoa, and though both were Ghibelline, hostilities, originating in commercial rivalry, often broke out between them. During the years 1277-84 encounters between their ships became more frequent and more serious, until in the latter year was fought one of the most memorable naval engagements of the middle ages. The Genoese fleet, which numbered at least ninety-six ships, and the Pisan fleet of seventy-two ships, met off Meloria on August 6th, 1284, and the battle ended in the complete defeat of the Pisans. No less than 9,272 prisoners were taken to Genoa, where most of them died from hardships or disease.² Florence was not slow to take advantage of Pisa's adversity, and at once leagued with Genoa, Lucca, Siena, and Pistoja to compass her destruction. After hostilities had commenced it dawned on the astute traders of Florence that the subjugation of Pisa would redound more to the advantage of the Genoese than of themselves, as Genoa, with her splendid fleet, would be mistress of the Mediterranean. The Pisans, observing that Florence was conducting the campaign in a half-hearted manner, empowered Count Ugolino della Gherardesca to open negotiations for peace, and these (it is alleged by the aid of gold sent to some leading Florentine citizens in flasks of Vernaccia wine) he brought to a successful issue.³ Pisa had no option but to accept the terms offered, and she was stripped of territory almost up to her walls. She was compelled to make large concessions not only to Florence, but to

¹ On the north side of the river the wall started from the weir, and followed the fourth course of the Mugnone to the Porta San Gallo; then turning south-east it passed through the Porta Pinti and the Porta alla Croce, and thence south-west to the river. On the south side of the river it ran nearly south from the river by the Porta S. Frediano to the Porta Romana; thence east to the Porta S. Giorgio, and by the Porta S. Niccolo to the river.

² At the end of sixteen years the prisoners, not more than 1,000 in number, were released.

³ Villani, lib. vii. cap. 89. For having saved his city Count Ugolino was made lord of Pisa, but he did not long enjoy the honour, as in the same year he fell a victim to the intrigues of an ambitious rival, and with his sons and grandsons he was starved to death in a tower of the Gualandi family (the "Torre della Sette Via"), which was thenceforth known as the "Torre della Fame." His sufferings have been immortalised by Dante. See *Inferno*, canto xxxiii.

Lucca, who was much enraged at peace having been concluded behind her back.

The importance of Pisa was thus greatly reduced, but she had been saved from extinction, and the Ghibellines began to take heart (1287). They had, too, been inspired by the Sicilian Vespers and by the death of Charles of Anjou, which occurred in 1285. Florence therefore deemed it expedient to renew hostilities against them, and in conjunction with other Guelph cities she declared war on Arezzo, which was now the only thriving Ghibelline city in Tuscany. The first invasion of Aretine territory was abortive, but the second had a very different issue. It ended with the great battle of Campaldino, which was fought on June 11th, 1289. The army of the Guelph League, numbering some 10,000 infantry and 1,600 cavalry, was commanded by Amerigo de Narbonne. The allied forces of Pisa and Arezzo, under Guido da Montefeltro and the warrior Archbishop Guglielmo degli Ubertini, though only about half as numerous, comprised the flower of the Ghibellines in Tuscany, the Marches, and Romagna. The Florentines at first wavered, when Corso Donati, *podestà* of Pistoja (of whom much will be heard anon), exclaiming, "If we lose, I will die with my fellow-citizens in battle; if we win, he who likes may come to Pistoja and condemn me," charged at the head of a troop of horse, in disobedience of orders, and the tide of battle turned. The engagement ended in the complete rout of the Aretines, whose losses are estimated at 1,700 killed and 2,000 taken prisoners.¹ Another Florentine commander who distinguished himself, Vieri de' Cerchi, was also destined to play a conspicuous, if ignoble, part on the stage of Florentine history. There was one individual, obscure enough at the time, who fought for the Guelphic cause on this occasion, and though his services are unrecorded, his mere presence gave the battle of Campaldino an importance for posterity that it would not otherwise possess. This was Dante Alighieri.

Many of the most prominent Ghibelline captains were slain, chief among whom were the Archbishop Guglielmo degli Ubertini and Guglielmino de' Pazzi (one of the Pazzi of Valdarno), who was noted for his valour. Had the Florentines immediately pushed on to Arezzo they would probably have taken it, but they wasted eight days in pillaging Bibbiena and the surrounding district, and when they reached Arezzo they found it prepared

¹Villani, lib. vii. cap. 131.

for a siege. They contented themselves with insulting the Aretines for a few days by running races under the walls, and throwing asses crowned with mitres into the city (as a mark of disrespect for the memory of the Archbishop), and then returned home. After a time Arezzo regained her prosperity, but Campaldino, like Montaperti, was in truth a battle between Guelphs and Ghibellines, and it inflicted on the latter a blow from which they never recovered.

The trade of Florence now rapidly increased. The three great Ghibelline cities being humbled—Siena at Colle, Pisa at Meloria, and Arezzo at Campaldino—she had access through Pisa to the sea, through Siena and Arezzo to Rome and Southern Italy; and as the Guelphs were dominant in Bologna, her merchandise was allowed to pass through that city to the north unimpeded by hostile tariffs. But this was not enough, and either because she aimed at a more complete ascendancy in Tuscany, or because the vindictive spirit of the Guelphs was unsatisfied, hostilities were resumed in 1290 against both Arezzo and Siena. The campaign, which was far from successful, lasted three years, at the end of which time Florence, being threatened with domestic troubles, was glad to conclude a treaty of peace.

Neither the victory of Campaldino nor the enhanced commercial prosperity had brought content to the city. Nay, it is probable that they intensified the storm that was gathering on the political horizon. The new aristocracy, puffed up with wealth and success, were becoming lawless and arrogant; while the *popolo minuto* were becoming strong enough to resist the galling insolence with which they were treated, and to demand a larger share in the government. Moreover the *grandi* were quarrelling among themselves.¹ Judged by her foreign policy, Florence appeared a united Guelph city, intent only on the extirpation of Ghibellinism, while, in fact, she was honeycombed with animosities

¹ Villari, ii. 82. The feud between the Adimari and the Tosinghi, Donati and Pazzi, has been already alluded to. Villani also mentions that there was "much warfare" between the Rossi and Tornaquinci, the Bardi and Mozzi, the Gheradini and Manieri, the Cavalcanti and Buondelmonti, between some of the Buondelmonti and the Giandonati, the Visdomeni and Falconieri, the Bostichi and Foraboschi, the Foraboschi and Malispini, and between many other houses, and also that the Frescobaldi and Donati quarrelled among themselves. All of these families (except a branch of the Malispini, who were Ghibellines, and the Falconieri, who are not mentioned) are stated by Villani to have been Guelphs in 1215, which shows that the Ghibelline aristocracy had disappeared. The Rossi, Bardi, Mozzi, and Cavalcanti were only just coming to the front in 1215.

and class jealousies which had nothing to do with either Church or Empire.¹ And her government was, according to Dino Compagni, thoroughly corrupt. It was the function of the priors, he says, "to guard and protect the property of the commune; to take care that the weak and the poor were not oppressed by the strong and the great, and had they done so they would have been of much use to the people. But very soon all this was changed, for the citizens in office were not mindful to observe the laws, but rather to pervert them. If any of their friends or relations incurred the penalties of the law, they contrived, with the aid of the magistrates and officials, to conceal their crimes so that they remained unpunished. Neither did they protect the property of the commune, but, on the contrary, they embezzled it, and drew much money from the treasury under pretence of rewarding public services. The helpless were not protected, but they were wronged, not only by the *grandi*, but by the *popolani grassi* who held office or were connected with the *grandi*, and many, by payment of money, escaped punishments to which they were liable. Hence the worthy citizens were discontented and blamed the priors because the Guelph nobles were in office."²

Nevertheless the priors, since their institution in 1282, had carried some reforms in the interests of the people. All nobles between the ages of fifteen and seventy, belonging to families who had been scheduled in 1286, were required to pay down two thousand lire as a provision for any fines to which they might become liable for disorderly conduct. But the most important measure was that for the abolition of serfdom, which was effected in 1289. This was perhaps prompted by humanity, but it was also a blow aimed at the landowners of the *contado*, whom it seriously weakened.³ In the same year more power was placed in the hands of the lower orders by adding five of the *Arti Minori* to the *Arti Maggiori*.⁴ And in 1291 a rigorous law was passed compelling submission to the authorised tribunals, and imposing heavy penalties on all who should plead exemption from their jurisdiction by reason of any grant from pope, emperor, or king.

¹ *La Vita Italiana nel Trecento*, p. 121.

² Dino Compagni (1883), p. 229.

³ The nobles, however, compelled the peasants on their estates, by violence and other devices, to submit to serfdom for some few years after it had been legally abolished.

⁴ These were probably the five specified by Villani, which existed in 1266. See *ante*, p. 32.

It is expressly stated in the preamble to this Act that it was intended to curb "the wolfish rapacity" of the nobles.¹

The civic rights of the *grandi* were still further restricted by making actual exercise of a trade an essential qualification for the office of prior instead of mere enrolment on the books of a guild.² Notwithstanding the disabilities imposed on them, and other repressive legislation, the power of the nobles was by no means broken, and but for their numerous family feuds they might have recovered their political ascendancy.³ They still had a preponderating influence in the administration of the powerful *Parte Guelfa*. They were often employed as ambassadors, and in warfare their services were indispensable, when important military posts were always entrusted to them. They scorned applying to the civil tribunals to redress their grievances, and taking the law into their own hands, were wont to punish real or imaginary wrongs under the archways of their towers. Supposed offenders were often flogged or tortured without the perpetrators of the outrage being brought to justice.⁴

With a view to putting an end to such lawless proceedings the famous *Ordinamenti della Giustizia* were passed.⁵ They have been called, not very happily, the Magna Charta of the Florentine Republic; for although they effected a democratic triumph at the time, they did not permanently safeguard the liberties of the people.⁶ The *Ordinamenti* are always associated with the name of Gian della Bella, but he was not their author, nor was

¹ Villari, i. 301.

² Villari, ii. 94. This further restriction was relaxed in 1295, after nobility had been made a disqualification for office. Among other measures passed between 1282 and 1293 were laws to prohibit priests from carrying arms, to make "trade corners" illegal, to limit the term of office of the *podestà* to six months, and to make outgoing priors ineligible for re-election for the space of three years.

³ Villari, ii. 82.

⁴ Villari, ii. 79. It seems that such outrages were not ended even by the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*, for Dino Compagni appears to be speaking of what was going on some eight or ten years later when he says, "the Bostichi family continually did many evil deeds. They would tie men up in their palaces that were in the Mercato Nuovo, in the very centre of the city, and put them to torture in broad daylight. People frequently remarked on the number of tribunals, and when enumerating the places where torture was inflicted they said, 'At the Bostichi houses in the market-place.'" — *Cronica Fiorentina* (1883), p. 269.

⁵ They are also called the *Ordini della Giustizia*. For an exhaustive disquisition both on the comparative value of the manuscript editions of these enactments and on their political aspect, see Villari, ii. cap. 8, from which most of the information here given is derived.

⁶ By Bonaini. See Villari, ii. 72.

he in office at the time they were passed.¹ It was, however, through his influence and public spirit that they became law. He was a partner in the great house of Pazzi, and had distinguished himself at the battle of Campaldino. Though of noble birth, he had espoused the popular side by reason, it is said, of a quarrel with Berto de' Frescobaldi, who had publicly insulted him in the church of San Piero Scheraggio.² However this may be, the genuineness of his democratic sympathies cannot be questioned, and he soon became the acknowledged leader of the people. It was said of him by those who knew him well that he was more devoted to the public good than any man in Florence,³ and that he had the courage to defend causes which others had abandoned.⁴ He was, however, overbearing and imprudent, and though more honest than most of the politicians of his day, he was not always above using official power for private ends.

The *Ordinamenti* became law on January 18th, 1293. It has been said of some of their provisions that they are "without parallel in the world's history";⁵ that in many respects they are glaringly unjust, and breathe rather a spirit of revenge than a desire for order, cannot be denied. At the same time it should be remembered that all previous legislative attempts to curb the turbulence of the *grandi* had proved ineffectual, and that their ostentatious contempt for law required drastic treatment. Moreover, some of the *Ordinamenti* were not intrinsically new, but rather enactments for the more thorough enforcement with heavier penalties of older laws, while others were not so inequitable as they appear on the surface. The object aimed at was the protection of the people from assaults by the nobles, and this it was sought to attain by—

- (1) A further exclusion of the nobles from the government.
- (2) Severer punishments for offences by the nobles against the people.
- (3) The strengthening of the trade guilds.

¹ They were drawn up by Donato Ristori, Ubertina della Strozza, and Baldo Aguglioni under order of the priors in office, December 15th, 1292, to February 15th, 1293. Villari, ii. 87.

² Ammirato, i. 330. Other nobles were also on the side of the people, e.g. some of the Magalotti, Mancini, Talenti, and Alberti.

³ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 8.

⁴ Dino Compagni (1883), p. 235.

⁵ *Storia dei Comuni Italiani*. P. E. Giudici. Bk. vi. Cited in Villari, i. 74. Very similar laws had been passed in Bologna in 1282, and it is a matter of controversy whether some of the Florentine *Ordinamenti* were not copied from the Bolognese.

Up to this time a trader of noble birth, who was a member of a guild, was eligible for a priorship. It was now enacted that nobles, unless they renounced their nobility, should be disqualified, and renunciation could only be effected with the sanction of the Signory.¹ This was but a step in advance of previous legislation, as the nobles had been excluded from the councils of the *capitano del popolo* in 1251, and from the One Hundred in 1267.² It was, however, an important step, as the Signory was in the nature of a cabinet. But nobles were, as before, admitted to the councils of the *podestà*. The Signory drew up a list of thirty-three families who were to be considered noble, which was soon enlarged to seventy-two.³ Members of the *popolani* who were obnoxious to the government were placed on this list in order to disfranchise them.⁴ It was indeed provided that ennoblement should be the punishment for any of the *popolani* guilty "of treason against the commonwealth." For the purpose of enforcing penalties for breaches of the ordinances a new officer was appointed, called the "Gonfalonier of Justice."⁵ He held office, like the priors, for two months, and he was elected by the members of the outgoing Signory, and he was taken from the different *sestieri* of the city in turn. He had nominally the same powers as the priors, with whom he lived, and at first was merely *primus inter pares*; but he soon became the chief of the Signory, and, as time went on, the most important personage in the State.⁶ A new standard (*gonfalone*) of the people (a red cross on a white field) was given into his charge by parliament, and 1,000 armed citizens were placed under his command.⁷ No relation of a prior could hold the office, and an outgoing gonfalonier was ineligible for re-election for one year.

The penalties under the *Ordinamenti* were as follows. The

¹ Villani, lib. viii. cap. i. Gian della Bella was elected a prior immediately after the passing of the *Ordinamenti*. Whether families who numbered among their members knights (*cavalieri*), or whether only individual knights were considered noble, seems doubtful. Trollope, i. 216.

² It seems, however, that, if specially summoned, nobles might attend meetings of these councils. Trollope, i. 220.

³ Giovanni Cambi. Cited by Napier, i. 349.

⁴ The stringency of this law was mitigated in 1295, when it was enacted that nobles who had changed their names should be exempt from disqualification.

⁵ The first gonfalonier of justice was Baldo de' Ruffoli.

⁶ Perrens (vol. ii. p. 385, note) seems to doubt that he was chief of the Signory.

⁷ This number was afterwards increased to 2,000, and at a still later date to 4,000. Villani, lib. viii. cap. i.

murder of one of the people by a noble was a capital offence, and where the deed was committed at the instance of a noble he and the assassin were both liable to death. His property was also confiscated; and it was the duty of the gonfalonier of justice and the *podestà* to demolish his house before he had been sentenced.¹ On the perpetration of a crime it was the duty of the *podestà* to discover its author within five, or at most eight, days, under pain of loss of office.² In such a case the duty devolved upon the *capitano del popolo*. If the criminal escaped justice, his relatives were required to pay a fine of 3,000 lire. Any noble who was accessory to a murder was liable to a fine of 2,000 lire. In cases of causing grievous bodily harm the aggressor was liable to the loss of a hand; or, if he escaped, to a fine of 2,000 lire.³ For inflicting slight wounds the punishment was a fine of 1,000 lire. The testimony of a single eye-witness, or of two of known probity who had not seen the crime committed, was deemed sufficient proof.⁴ If a fine were not paid within ten days the defaulter was to have his right hand cut off.⁵

The law of 1286 requiring scheduled nobles between the ages of fifteen and seventy to deposit 2,000 lire each as a guarantee for fines was re-enacted, and a new list was prepared. If any noble who had not paid a guarantee was fined, his relations (within specified degrees) were liable to his fine; but they might reimburse themselves out of his property if it was confiscated. Both Villani and Dino Compagni, in almost the same words, say "that one associate belonging to the *grandi* should be bound for another."⁶ The meaning of this phrase is not very clear. Professor Villari thinks that it relates only to fines levied on a *Consorteria* for offences for which that body was collectively liable.⁷ It is certain that the *Consorterie* began to languish after

¹ Some damage was done to the house, but it was rarely completely demolished, although the ordinances decreed that it should be destroyed "utterly from the foundation." Villari, ii. 102; Trollope, i. 219.

² This was only so in the case of serious offences.

³ *La Vita Italiana nel Trecento*, p. 122.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 121. Villari makes no mention of the sufficiency of a single eye-witness, and says that in cases of wounding the testimony of the victim was also necessary. The number of witnesses was shortly afterwards raised to three.

⁵ Trollope, i. 217.

⁶ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 1; Dino Compagni (1883), p. 234.

⁷ It is clear that Machiavelli was mistaken in saying that all associates of an offending noble were liable to the same punishment as the offender (1896 ed., p. 78). The nature of the *Consorterie*, which has already been described (see *ante*, p. 11), coupled with the fact that almost the whole of the patrimony

the passing of the *Ordinamenti*, and were ultimately, little by little, dissolved.¹ No one was permitted to beg for money from his friends for the purpose of paying a fine, and anyone who provided him with money for such an object was himself liable to a penalty. Any noble who "entered the Palace" (*i.e.* for the purpose of interviewing a prior or some official) was liable to a fine of 100 lire. There was no appeal from any sentence pronounced under these ordinances, which superseded the common law.

Perhaps the most iniquitous of all the *Ordinamenti* was the one which provided that boxes, called *tamburi* (literally drums), should be placed outside the official residences of the gonfalonier and the *capitano del popolo* for the reception of secret accusations against the nobles; and a person thus accused was said to be *tamburato*.²

The people were subject to heavy fines if they did not inform against nobles who had injured them.³ For assaults on each other they were merely liable to the common-law penalties; but if they committed acts of violence while aiding the nobles in their broils, such penalties were doubled.

The number of the guilds was now fixed at twenty-one, of which twelve were placed among the *Arti Maggiori* and nine among the *Arti Minori*. The members of these bodies were required to take a solemn oath that they would endeavour to preserve concord among the people. The promotion of all companies, conventions, and agreements, unsanctioned by law or alien to the constitution of the guilds, was made a capital offence. Any guild concerned in any such transaction was mulcted in 1,000 lire, and its consuls in 500 lire.

Such were the most important provisions of the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*, from which a fair idea of their scope and spirit may be gained. They were an attempt to put down lawless violence by legalised violence, and, as was only to be expected, they failed.⁴ The *grandi* were roused to a pitch of fury that

was shared by a family in common, makes the provisions with regard to payment of fines less inequitable than they appear. Villari, ii. 1-71 and 84.

¹ *La Vita Italiana nel Trecento*, p. 125.

² Trollope, i. 221; Napier, i. 349. The latter says that the *tamburi* were outside the houses of the *podestà* and *capitano*.

³ In 1295 fines were imposed on those making false accusations.

⁴ Accounts differ as to the first serious offence that was punished under the *Ordinamenti*. Dino Compagni, who ought to have known, says (1883 ed., p. 235) that it occurred while he was gonfalonier (July and August, 1293), and

boded ill for the tranquillity of the city. They asked if their houses were to be destroyed because one of their horses chanced to swish its tail in the face of one of the *popolani*, or because they unintentionally jostled the people in a crowd? ¹ A meeting was held in the church of S. Jacopo sopr' Arno, ² at which Berto de' Frescobaldi, ³ complaining that "these dogs of people" had deprived them of honours and office and forbidden them to enter the palace, advocated that they should seize arms and rush into the piazza, slaying all the people whom they met, whether friends or foes, as the only means of freeing themselves from slavery. But Baldo della Tossa pointed out the risks of such a proceeding, and persuaded the nobles to attempt to gain their end by cunning. This was no difficult matter, for Gian della Bella was too honest a man to maintain for long his popularity with his party, many of whom were as lawless as the nobles. The butchers were notoriously disorderly, and, led by one Pecora, they had attempted to intimidate the Signory. Gian della Bella's enemies, knowing that he was a just man, called his attention to this, as well as to instances of corrupt administration on the part of the judges. "Let the city perish," he exclaimed, "rather than these things should continue." And he at once initiated laws to remedy the evils. Dino Compagni warned him of the plot that was on foot for his overthrow, but he was too impetuous to heed, and he fell into the trap. His unpopularity was still further increased by an attempt to break the power of the great *Parte Guelfa*. He was a thorough-going Guelph, but he foresaw that the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia* would not suffice to hold the nobles in check while that association flourished. Accordingly, he proposed that it should be deprived of its seal of office, and that its property should be handed over to the State. ⁴ More-

that he caused the houses of the *Consorteria* of the Galligai family to be demolished, because one of the family had caused the death of a son of Ugolino Benivieni (a Florentine merchant) in France. Villani, whom it is usually safer to follow, says that this murder was committed by one of the Galli family, whose houses were destroyed by the first gonfalonier, Baldo de' Ruffoli. Professor Villari prefers Villani's version, but Gino Capponi accepts that of Dino Compagni. This alleged inaccuracy of Compagni is one of the facts adduced by those who question the authenticity of his chronicle.

¹ Dino Compagni (1883), p. 235.

² This church was rebuilt in 1580. Its picturesque campanile is a prominent object from the Lung' Arno.

³ It was he who insulted Gian della Bella in S. Piero Scheraggio.

⁴ Villani, lib. viii. cap. i. Ammirato (l. 335) says that he actually accomplished this. If so, the law effecting it must have been speedily repealed.

over, the lower orders were not unanimous in their attachment to him. The prosperity of many of the artificers and shopkeepers depended on the custom of the nobles, whom they did not wish to see still further repressed. Such was Gian della Bella's position, when an incident happened of which his opponents were not slow to avail themselves. A quarrel between Simone Galastroni and Corso Donati (of Campaldino fame), who was one of the most haughty and overbearing of the *grandi*, led to an affray in which some of the followers of Galastroni were killed or wounded (1295). Both parties laid complaints in the court of the *podestà*, who, through a fraudulent manipulation of the evidence by a notary, acquitted Donati, who was guilty, and convicted Galastroni, who was innocent. The people, who knew the rights of the case, but did not know of the deception, were furious with the *podestà* at what they believed to be a corrupt sentence, and they attacked his palace. Gian della Bella attempted to restrain them, but to his astonishment he found that his influence was gone. The palace was broken into and ransacked, but the *podestà* and his wife contrived to escape. Corso Donati, who was in the palace at the time, saved his life by climbing over the roofs of the adjoining houses. Gian's enemies succeeded in procuring the election of a Signory of their own way of thinking, and he was most unjustly indicted for having occasioned the late riots. His friends at once took up arms, and civil strife would have ensued had he not left the city. His departure was taken in the interests of peace, and he believed that justice would have been done him, but in this he was mistaken. His enemies were more numerous than he imagined, and the remainder of his life was passed in exile.¹ Villani says that the very men who had aided him to rise, through envy contrived his downfall, and he adds "that both past and present experience truly shows that whoever becomes leader of the proletariat in Florence will be overthrown, because the ungrateful people never give men their due reward."² The effect of the expulsion of Gian della Bella was the loss of some of the power which had recently been acquired by the popular party, followed by increased discontent and continuous disturbances.

¹ It is likely that he would have been recalled but for the intervention of Pope Boniface VIII.

² Villani, lib. viii. cap. 8.

Before a year was out, the *grandi* had obtained by a great show of force some modification of the odious *Ordinamenti*. Distinctions were made between the punishments to which principals and accessories were liable, and the number of witnesses requisite for the proof of homicide was raised from two to three.¹ Their chief gain, however, consisted in the repeal of the provision which made the actual exercise of a trade a necessary qualification for a seat in the Signory. The measure effecting this change provoked so much discontent that the priors who had passed it were mobbed and stoned in the streets.² The popular party then obtained a majority in the Signory, and they proclaimed some of the least obnoxious of the nobles *popolani*, in order to weaken the party. Del Lungo thinks that Dante was then made one of the people.³ Other laws were passed to restore to the Ordinances their former rigour, but except during one brief interval,⁴ the people never again obtained so complete an ascendancy as Gian della Bella had procured for them.

The position which Florence occupied, and the estimation in which her citizens were held throughout Europe, is curiously illustrated by an incident that occurred in the year 1300. At the jubilee that was instituted by Boniface VIII., no less than twelve Powers were represented by Florentine ambassadors.⁵ The Pope was so struck by it that he is said to have remarked, "The men of Florence form a fifth element."

¹ This last concession was soon withdrawn (Villani, lib. viii. cap. 12).

² Villani, lib. viii. cap. 12.

³ Villani, ii. 139.

⁴ At the time of the Ciompi rising.

⁵ The ambassadors were Ugolino da Vicchio, for the King of England; Musciatto Franzesi, for the King of France; Ranieri Lanzeri, for the King of Bohemia; Vermiglio Alfani, for the King of Germany; Simone Rossi, for Russia; Bernardo Ernari, for Verona; Guiscardo de' Bastari, for the Khan of Tartary; Manno degli Adimari, for the King of Naples; Guido Tabanca, for the King of Sicily; Lapo degli Uberti, for Pisa; Cino di Diotisalvi, for Camerino; and Bencivenni Folchi, for the Knights of St. John (Trollope, i. 233).

ART AND LITERATURE DURING THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

ARCHITECTS	SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	AUTHORS
Arnolfo di Cambio	Arnolfo di Cambio	Cimabue	Dante Guido Cavalcanti Brunetto Latini Dino Compagni

For the immense progress that was made in the fine arts during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the world is more indebted to Florence than to any other single city, but this is not so with regard to the period of which we are speaking (1200-1300). It is not to Florence that we must turn for the birthplace of the renaissance either in sculpture, architecture, or painting. Niccola Pisano (1206-80), Giunta da Pisa (c. 1202-58), and Guido da Siena were, as their names indicate, natives of other states. Florence was, indeed, the last of the three rival republics to enter the field of art, and she was only commencing her grand architectural works when Pisa and Siena were completing theirs. It is true that the Church of San Giovanni (now known as the Baptistery) is said to date from the seventh century, but what the building then erected was like we have no record, and it was so entirely remodelled by Arnolfo that it must be regarded as a thirteenth-century edifice. The mosaics in its tribune were commenced by Giacomo da Turrita, and must have been in process of construction while the Buondelmonti and Amidei feud was at its height.

CIMABUE, the first Florentine painter of note, was born in 1240 and died about 1303. His Christian name was Giovanni, and he came of the noble family of Cimabui, called also Gualtieri. A commentator of Dante (known as the *Anonimo*), who wrote about thirty years after Cimabue's death, says, "Cimabue of Florence, a painter of the time of our author, knew more of this noble art than any other man; but he was so arrogant and proud withal, that if anyone discovered a fault in his work, or if he perceived one himself . . . he would instantly destroy that work, however costly it might be."¹ Though his paintings are still in the "Greek manner," like those of Guido and Giunta, they show signs of the influence of Niccola Pisano. He painted

¹ Vasari, i. 43.

at Pisa and also probably at Assisi. His greatest work is the Madonna¹ in the Rucellai Chapel in the Church of S. Maria Novella. It was painted in 1266, in a garden near the Gate of San Pietro, and it was first shown to Charles of Anjou. When the public saw it, they were so enthusiastic in their admiration that they carried it at the head of a procession to the church for which it was painted with great rejoicings.² "From the date of this altar-piece the pre-eminence of the Florentine school begins to develop itself, expands later in the person of Giotto, to reunite in Ghirlandaio all the branches of its progress, and finally to culminate in the greatness of Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci."³ Another large picture of the Madonna and Child by Cimabue is in the Accademia at Florence, and a fresco of S. Francis in the Church of S. Croce is attributed to him.⁴ His reputed portrait may be seen in the fresco of the Church Militant and Triumphant, by Simone Memmi, in the Spanish Chapel adjoining the Church of S. Maria Novella.

ARNOLFO DI CAMBIO was born at Colle in 1240.⁵ He was the most eminent pupil of the great sculptor, Niccola Pisano, and it is said that he also studied design under Cimabue.⁶ In early life he devoted most of his time to sculpture, and that most beautiful form of monument, a recumbent effigy in a canopied recess, between two curtain-drawing angels, was his creation.⁷ He worked at Naples for Charles of Anjou in 1277, and, possibly rather later, at Perugia. He then came to Florence, where he attained great eminence as an architect and where he remained during the rest of his life. "To comprehend what Arnolfo did for Florence we have but to look down on that fair city from one of the neighbouring eminences, and note all the most striking objects which greet the eye—the Duomo, the Palazzo

¹ Mr. E. G. Gardner (*Story of Florence*, p. 361) attributes this Madonna to Duccio on account of its Siennese character, but it is hardly likely that Cimabue's Madonna could have been removed from the church for which it was painted and replaced by a Duccio without some record of its removal.

² Vasari tells us that the "Borgo Allegri," where Cimabue's *bottega* was situated, was so called after these rejoicings. It is more probable that it was called after the family of *Allegri*. See Vasari, i. 42, note 1.

³ Crowe and Cavacaselle, *History of Painting in Italy*, i. 205.

⁴ Lafenestre, p. 239.

⁵ Or perhaps 1232 (Vasari, v. 5).

⁶ Vasari is mistaken as to Arnolfo's parentage. He was the son of Cambio and not of the German architect Maestro Jacopo, or "Lapo" as he was called by the Florentines. It is owing to this mistake that Arnolfo is often called "Arnolfo di Lapo."

⁷ See the tomb of Cardinal de Braye at Orvieto.

Vecchio, Sta. Croce . . . and the walls which surround her, are his works."¹ !

A decree commanding that the Church of S. Reparata² (as the cathedral was then called) should be rebuilt was issued in 1294, and it is an interesting document as showing the spirit in which such works were undertaken. Arnolfo, who is described as "the chief architect of the commune," is directed to prepare a plan for the renovation of the church, "of such magnificence that neither the industry nor the genius of man shall be able to invent anything that shall surpass it," and he was given to understand that his design would be rejected if it were not of sufficient splendour to satisfy the unanimous resolve of a large number of citizens.³ Arnolfo's plan was approved, and the ceremony of blessing the first stone took place on September 8th, 1298. To meet the expense a poll tax of two soldi and an income tax of four per cent. was levied.⁴

Simultaneously with the Duomo rose the spacious Church of Santa Croce, also designed by Arnolfo, which owes its celebrity rather to its frescoes and monuments than to its architectural excellence.⁵

In 1298 the Palazzo della Signoria, or, as it has been called in recent times, the Palazzo Vecchio, was commenced. Its erection was occasioned by the frequent disturbances at the bi-monthly elections, in consequence of which the priors did not feel safe in the official residence which they then occupied on the north side of the Piazza,⁶ and they requested to be provided with one strong enough to resist an attack. Accordingly, some of the

¹ Perkins, i. 53. Perkins also mentions Or San Michele, but this is a mistake. The church of that name built by Arnolfo was burnt down in 1304, and not rebuilt till 1380.

² After it was rebuilt it was dedicated to S. Maria del Fiore, which name it has borne ever since. It was not consecrated till 1436.

³ Richa's *Notizie Storiche della Chiese Fiorentine*, vi. 14. A doubt has been cast on the date of this decree (Villari, ii. 120). Reumont in his *Tavole (sub anno)* gives a version of this decree dated April 1st, 1299.

⁴ Coppo Stefani, cited by Trollope, i. 231, note.

⁵ According to an inscription on a stone in the church, it was founded in 1295, but both Villani (lib. viii. cap. 9) and Ammirato (vol. i. p. 336) say that the first stone was laid in 1294. The Misses Horner (vol. i. p. 285) give 1297 as the date, but do not give their authority. The church, though unfinished, was opened for worship in 1320. The façade was not commenced till 1857, and would never have been executed but for the generosity of an Englishman (Mr. Sloane), who contributed £12,000 to its cost.

In the houses which belonged to the Cerchi family. Villani, lib. viii. cap. 26.

houses of the Foraboschi were purchased by the State, on the site of which the present Palazzo Vecchio was built.¹ The tower of the Foraboschi, which was known as the "Torre della Vacca," and was about 100 feet high, was so strong, and rested on such solid foundations, that Arnolfo did not scruple to place on it a superstructure of double its height. Thus was constructed the campanile of the Palazzo Vecchio, which is not only one of the most conspicuous objects in Florence, but one of the most impressive buildings of its kind in Italy.

The third circuit of walls, which had been commenced in 1285, was carried on with increased activity under Arnolfo's superintendence, and a law was passed in 1299 rendering all wills invalid by which nothing was bequeathed towards the cost of the work.

The building of the beautiful Church of S. Maria Novella, which, as has been stated, was founded in 1279, was in progress at this time, but it was not completed till 1349.

Turning from art to literature, we are at once brought face to face with the greatest name with which Florence, to her honour and her shame, is associated. DANTE ALIGHIERI was born in Florence towards the end of May, 1265. Beatrice died on June 9th, 1290, and probably about two years later the *Vita Nuova* was written. "It is epoch-making in many ways—as the first great example of Italian prose, the first revelation of the genius of the greatest mediæval poet, and the incarnation of that romantic conception of ideal love by which the Middle Age might fairly claim to have augmented the heritage bequeathed by antiquity."² Parts of the *Convito* were also written before the end of the thirteenth century.

Second to Dante in fame, but preceding him in time, is his friend GUIDO CAVALCANTI, whose untimely death in 1300 will be subsequently alluded to. He was not only a poet but a philosopher, and in the opinion of some his poetry is marred by the introduction of too much metaphysical thought. He was also a politician, and having married a daughter of the great Farinata degli Uberti, became the leader of the remnant of the Florentine Ghibellines. He is best known to English readers by Shelley's translation of his sonnet to Dante. BRUNETTO LATINI (1210-1294), famous for his great learning, but more famous as the tutor of Dante, wrote his *Tesoro* in the thirteenth century. In his

¹ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 26. It also occupied a part of the site of the old Church of S. Piero Scheraggio.

² Garnett, p. 32.

Canzoni are to be found the first examples of blank verse, and "for an age which laid so much stress on artificial form in poetry these verses of Brunetto mark the beginning of a new epoch."¹

DINO COMPAGNI'S *Cronica Fiorentina* narrates events which took place between 1280 and 1312, but whether it was written in the form in which it has come down to us by an eye-witness is a matter of controversy.² However this may be, it is "an interesting monument of Florentine literature."³

Education at this time had become general. It is said that there was no one in Florence who could not read, and that even the donkey-boys sang verses from Dante. There is no doubt that the germs of an independent and essentially national culture appeared in Florence about the year 1300, which, to the regret of some modern writers, were afterwards so completely stifled by the humanists of the Renaissance.⁴

It is interesting to bear in mind that the writing of the *Vita Nuova* and the founding of the Duomo, the Palazzo Vecchio, and S. Croce were almost synchronous with the passing of the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*.

¹ Burckhardt's *Renaissance in Italy* (1890), 310.

² Villari, ii. 109, note. Garnett's *Italian Literature*, p. 103. Some German critics believe it to be a forgery, but Del Lungo (who has recently edited it) and Gino Capponi hold it to be genuine. Villari admits it as evidence, but with caution.

³ Symonds' *Age of the Despots*, pp. 239-250, where the question of the authenticity of the *Cronica* is discussed at some length. Symonds holds it to be a *rifacimento* of an older document.

⁴ Burckhardt's *Renaissance in Italy*, p. 203.

CHAPTER V

1300-1318

THE BIANCHI AND NERI—HENRY OF LUXEMBURG IN ITALY—
DANTE IN EXILE—ART AND LITERATURE

THE struggle between Guelphs and Ghibellines had no sooner subsided¹ than Florence became the scene of another faction-fight, which was waged with equal bitterness and with (at least for the world of letters) more far-reaching consequences. This was the historic feud between the *Bianchi* and *Neri*. Nominally it had its origin in Pistoja, which had an evil reputation for turbulence, even among the turbulent communities of mediæval Italy. For many years past there had been a family quarrel between two branches of the great Pistojan house of Cancellieri. A common ancestor had married two wives, one of whom was named Bianca, and the members of the branch which sprung from her were known as *Bianchi*. The descendants of the other wife, out of opposition, called themselves *Neri*. How the feud between them arose matters not; but in the year 1300 it was occasioning so much disorder and bloodshed that the government of Pistoja appealed to Florence to aid them in putting an end to it. Accordingly the Signory took in hand for a time the management of Pistojan affairs, and with a view to restoring order compelled the leaders of the two factions to reside in Florence. Unfortunately the two branches of the Cancellieri had severally intermarried with two leading Florentine families who were also at enmity (the *Bianchi* with the Cerchi and the *Neri* with the Frescobaldi), and on arriving in Florence they took up their abodes with their respective connections.² It was not long before hostilities broke out between the Cerchi and Frescobaldi, in which almost the whole of Florence took part. The former

¹ It was virtually over, but the names Guelph and Ghibelline lingered on for many a year. They were too useful in recalling and reviving hatred to be allowed by party politicians to disappear.

² Villani, lib. viii. cap. 38.

party called themselves *Bianchi* and the latter *Neri*. Hence to all appearance the remedy which had extinguished the feud in Pistoja had transplanted it to Florence.

But in truth the Pistojan family quarrel had nothing to do with the Florentine feud beyond giving names to factions which already existed, and perhaps hastening an open rupture between them. There were animosities at work in Florence which must before long have occasioned civil strife without any extraneous aid. The composition of these factions was somewhat complex, resulting from the combined action of political, economic, and personal causes. The *Bianchi* comprised about one half of the *grandi* and all the *popolo minuto*; the *Neri*, the other half of the *grandi* and the bulk of the *popolano grasso*.¹ The *grandi* had divided partly, as will be seen directly, from private antipathies, but partly on the question of the maintenance of the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*. Some were determined on procuring the repeal of these enactments at all risks, while others had resolved to offer no further opposition to them. The former called themselves *Neri*, and the latter *Bianchi*. The *popolo minuto*, whose well-being depended on the *Ordinamenti*, were the natural enemies of the *Neri* nobles, and so, of course, joined the *Bianchi* party. Trade jealousies were beginning to separate the *popolano grasso* from the *popolo minuto*, and as the latter were *Bianchi*, the former became *Neri*. Thus, while the coming struggle was to a great extent a continuance of the old conflict between the nobles and the people with a rearrangement of forces, it had within it the germs of a new conflict between capital and labour. It was also further complicated and intensified by a strong personal element. The *Neri* were led by Corso Donati, the *Bianchi* by Vieri de' Cerchi; and between the families of these two men there was a bitter enmity of some standing. This largely affected the distribution of parties, for many espoused one side or the other more from attachment to its leader than from any political reason.

¹ This split divided many families. Of the Bardi, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Nerli, Manelli, and Gherardini, some were *Bianchi* and some *Neri*. All of the Cerchi, Abati, Mozzi, Scali, Malispini, Adimari, and Falconieri, and most of the Tosinghi, Bostichi, Giandonati, Pigli, Vecchietti, Arrigucci, and Cavalcanti were *Bianchi*. All of the Donati, Pazzi, Visdomini, Manieri, Bagnesi, Tornaquinci, Spini, Buondelmonti, Gianfigliuzzi, Agli, Brunelleschi, Caviocchi, and Acciaiuoli were *Neri* (Villani, lib. viii. cap. 39; Gino Capponi, i. 106, 107). It will be noted that all of the above were Guelph families except the Brunelleschi and Malispini, and even these were never entirely Ghibelline.

The Cerchi were a family of traders who had recently acquired enormous wealth and large landed estates. They had, moreover, much influence with the Signory, to whom they had lent their houses in the Piazza della Signoria for an official residence.¹ Vieri, the head of the family, had distinguished himself at the battle of Campaldino, but he was not remarkable for ability. Like most of the Cerchi, he was uncouth and uncultured.²

The Donati were an old feudal family who were proud of the blue blood in their veins, and though comparatively poor, they formed a numerous and powerful *Consorteria*.³ They had, however, an evil reputation (they were called *Malafami*), but how they earned it does not appear.⁴ Corso, the head of the house, was an altogether different stamp of man to Vieri de' Cerchi. He was handsome and accomplished. An opponent describes him as "much resembling Catiline the Roman, but more cruel."⁵ He was nicknamed "the Baron" on account of his arrogance, and he is said to have carried himself as if all Florence belonged to him. That there should have been unfriendly relations between two such families is not surprising. The Donati despised the lowly origin and vulgar manners of the Cerchi, and envied them their wealth; and the Cerchi resented the undisguised contempt with which they were treated by the Donati.⁶ Unfortunately they were neighbours, and so frequent were the affrays between them that the ward in which they lived was called the *Sesto dello Scandolo*, "the scandalous ward."⁷

Such was the origin of the struggle between the Florentine *Bianchi* and *Neri*. That a purely local feud should have evoked in after times an interest so universal is due to the influence which it had on the career of Dante. He joined the ranks of the *Bianchi*, not, however, from personal or political motives, but from a lofty and farsighted patriotism.⁸ The first encounter of any moment between the two parties took place on May Day, when, according to custom, dancing was going on in the Piazza

¹ They also possessed houses in the borgo San Jacopo, at the corner of the present Via Guicciardini (Horner, i. 514).

² Villani, who belonged to the opposite faction, describes them (lib. viii. cap. 39) as "savage."

³ *La Vita Italiana nel Trecento*, p. 123.

⁴ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 39.

⁵ Dino Compagni, p. 267.

⁶ When Corso Donati wished to know if Vieri de' Cerchi had spoken in public he would ask, "Has the ass of Porta brayed to-day?" (Villani, ii. 141).

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ The poet Guido Cavalcanti also joined the *Bianchi*, but from hostility to Corso Donati.

di Santa Trinità. Among the spectators were some thirty prominent members of each faction, who, after insulting and jostling each other, drew their swords, and a general mêlée ensued, in which Ricoverino de' Cerchi had his nose cut off, and many others were wounded. In the following month Boniface VIII. sent Cardinal Matteo Acquasparta to Florence, ostensibly to mediate between the two parties, but in reality to further a secret design which the Pope entertained of adding Tuscany to the papal states, and he hoped to further his object by crushing the *Bianchi*.¹ It is probable that the *Bianchi* leaders were aware of the Pope's intentions, as they displayed an unwillingness to be guided by his legate. Nor did the people view papal interference with favour, as they foresaw that the reunion of the nobles would imperil their own political power. Accordingly they armed themselves with crossbows and attacked the house in which Acquasparta was lodging. The Cardinal, indignant at the insult, placed Florence under an interdict and hastened back to Rome.

Brawls and bloodshed continued until June 23rd, when an unprovoked attack was made on the consuls of the guilds, as they wended their way in procession to make a customary offering in the Church of S. Giovanni, by a party of *Neri* shouting, "You have deprived us who fought and conquered at Campaldino of office and honour in our native city."² The Government (of whom Dante and Dino Compagni were members), with culpable weakness, instead of punishing the offenders only, banished certain members of both parties.³ The *Bianchi* exiles were directed to go to Sarzana, and the *Neri* to Città di Pieve. The *Bianchi*, although unjustly condemned, obeyed at once; the *Neri*, who alone were guilty, resisted, but were eventually compelled to yield. The climate of Sarzana was notoriously unhealthy, so before long the Government (perhaps glad of a pretext for annulling an unjust sentence) allowed the *Bianchi* to return. For one of them, alas! the reprieve came too late. The poet Guido Cavalcanti expired soon after he reached home from a

¹ Secret negotiations had already passed between Corso Donati and the Pope through Geri Spini, who was the Pope's banker.

² Dino Compagni, p. 245.

³ The exiled *Neri* included members of the Donati, Pazzi, Manieri, and Spini families; the exiled *Bianchi* were Guido Cavalcanti, and members of the Cerchi, della Tosa, Adimari, Gherardini, and Malispini families (Dino Compagni, p. 245).

malarious fever contracted while in exile. This, says Villani, "was a great misfortune, as he was a philosopher and a very accomplished man, though rather too sensitive and passionate."¹

Frequent collisions between the two parties continued to occur, and not only was the city in a state of constant tumult, but the feud spread to Lucca and reappeared in Pistoja.

The *Neri*, conscious that the struggle was going against them, secretly represented to the Pope that the *Bianchi* were in fact Ghibellines, and urged him to send to their assistance Charles of Valois, whom he had tempted into Italy at the head of an armed force, with the promise of an imperial crown. On their action becoming known to the Signory, some of their leaders (among others Corso Donati) were heavily fined, and ambassadors—of whom in all probability Dante was one—were despatched to Rome to explain the true position of Florentine affairs to Boniface.² But the cause of the *Bianchi* was inconsistent with the Pope's designs on Tuscany, and he turned a deaf ear to their pleading. He was moreover under heavy pecuniary obligations to the great house of Spini, who were influential members of the *Neri* party, so he dismissed the ambassadors with profuse protestations that he desired only the tranquillity of Florence.

It was obvious to the *Bianchi* that the Pope intended to aid their opponents, and they had ample time to prepare for the coming storm, but they proved unequal to the occasion. Indeed throughout the whole of this period they displayed a lamentable want of prudence and energy. Everything was in their favour, as the most powerful of their enemies were in exile, and the mass of the people were with them. But no steps were taken for the defence of the city, and when Charles of Valois, at the head of his forces, appeared in November of the following year (1301) at the Castle of Staggia, near Poggibonsi, he found Florence quite unprepared for a siege. Here he halted and sent emissaries nominally to proclaim that he was coming as a peace-maker, but really to ascertain what sort of a reception he might expect. The Signory professed to be unable to decide whether he was to be permitted to enter, and took the unprecedented step of

¹ Lib. viii. cap. 42.

² It is a matter of controversy among Italian historians whether Dante was one of those who were sent, but Professor Villari shows good reason for believing that he was. Villari, ii. 153, note.

referring the matter to the Trade Guilds, all of whom, except the Bakers, declared for his admission.¹

There is but little doubt that even then Charles' entrance would have been prevented had Vieri de' Cerchi been made of sterner stuff, and his refusal to undertake responsibility at this time has been thought by some Dante commentators to be "il gran rifiuto" in the celebrated passage of the *Inferno* (cant. iii., line 60) which has given rise to so much speculation.²

On November 1st³ Charles entered Florence on his treacherous errand with 800 foreign and 1,400 Italian horse, but his entry was effected with as little show of force as possible. Hence Dante says that he came "without arms, save only the lance which Judas tilted with."⁴ As he was supported by all the *Neri* he was completely master of the city. He occupied the houses of the Frescobaldi and Spini, and thus commanded both ends of the Ponte Trinità.⁵ On the following day, at an imposing ceremony held in the Church of S. Maria Novella, the government of the city was formally handed over to him for the purpose of reconciling the two parties, and he solemnly swore and promised on the honour of a king's son to preserve peace in the city. It was not long before he broke the oath which he had never intended to keep. With his connivance, Corso Donati, at the head of an armed band, effected an entrance into the city, broke open the prisons and released the prisoners, and drove the Priors from their official residence. By an act of treachery Charles inveigled the chiefs of the *Bianchi* party into his power and detained them in custody. At length the Signory realised the situation and ordered the tocsin to be rung, but the hour for action was past. Only two members of the Adimari family, with their attendants, obeyed the summons, the Priors resigned, and the city was at the mercy of Corso Donati and his ruffianly followers.⁶ For five days men were murdered, women outraged, shops looted, and houses burned, while the prince who

¹ Dino Compagni, p. 256.

² Trollope, i. 264. The better opinion seems to be that this passage refers to the abdication of Pope Celestine V.

³ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 49. Dino Compagni (p. 258) says the entry was on November 4th.

⁴ *Purgatorio*, xx. 71, 2.

⁵ The Spini palace still stands in the Piazza S. Trinità. It is now known as the Palazzo Feroni.

⁶ Dino Compagni gives a graphic account of the state of imbecility to which the government was reduced, and of the treachery with which it was surrounded. He was one of the Priors at the time.

had sworn to maintain order remained in his palace, affecting ignorance of all that was going on. At length the tumult spent itself, and the *Neri* proceeded to appoint Priors from their own party. It is in the accounts of these disturbances that the name of the Medici first appears in the annals of Florence. Mention is made of a member of a family bearing that name (belonging apparently to the *popolani grassi*) who attacked and left for dead one of the *Bianchi*.

In order to complete the discomfiture of the *Bianchi*, letters purporting to prove that they were plotting against Charles were forged and laid before him. Whether he was duped or not is uncertain, but he banished all who were supposed to be implicated.¹ Before his departure no less than 600 prominent citizens were driven into exile, and their property was confiscated.² On January 27th (1302) Dante was condemned to pay a fine of 5,000 lire on a fabricated charge of peculation while a Prior,³ but there is now no doubt that he was punished for refusing his official sanction to the payment of subsidies to Charles of Valois. On a State paper recording the sums paid to Charles at this time, there is a marginal note in a contemporary hand that "the true and secret cause of Dante's exile was his opposition to these payments." If the fine was not paid he was to be exiled for two years. He was in Siena at the time of his trial, and was sentenced in contumacy for non-appearance. On March 10th, in the same year, he was condemned to be burned alive if he entered Florentine territory.⁴

After completing the establishment of the *Neri* in power (1302)—the real object of his coming—Charles left for Rome. He had extorted large sums of money from the wealthy Florentines, but his rapacity was not satisfied, and he applied for more to the Pope, who declined his request with the remark that "he had been at the fountain of gold."⁵ It was said of him that he came to Tuscany to make peace and left it at war, and that he went to Sicily to make war and concluded an ignominious peace.⁶

¹ Among others, members of the Cerchi, Adimari, Tosinghi, and Gherardini families.

² They found asylums in Pisa, Pistoja, Arezzo, and Bologna.

Dante was Prior from June 15th to August 15th, 1300.

³ Similar sentences were passed on him in September, 1311, and October, 1311, and were not formally reversed till 1494.

⁴ Dino Compagni, p. 272.

⁵ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 50.

Notwithstanding that the *Bianchi* had been overpowered, riots and bloodshed continued. By order of Fulcieri da Calboli, who was in the pay of the *Neri*, Donati Alberti was tortured and members of the Gherardini, Cavalcanti and Galigai families were beheaded. Corso Donati was busy sowing the seeds of dissension among his own party, whose victory had not placed him in the position to which he aspired. Three members of the *popolani grassi*, Rosso della Tosa, Pazzino Pazzi and Geri Spini, had between them contrived to monopolise a controlling influence in public affairs, and Corso set himself to create an opposition powerful enough to overthrow them (1303). This he did by proclaiming that the *popolani grassi* (whom he designated as "dogs") had enslaved the city, and by insinuating that they were helping themselves out of the public treasury.¹ By such means he attracted followers from *Bianchi* and *Neri*, *grandi* and *popolo minuto*—a motley crew, but strong enough to menace the Government.² Collisions between the two parties occurred and gave rise to scenes of indescribable disorder. The city was before long in a state of anarchy, and the Government was so helpless that it had to appeal to Lucca for armed assistance before order could be restored.

In 1304 Pope Benedict IX. (who had succeeded Boniface VIII.) made an honest though fruitless attempt at pacification. His legate, Cardinal Niccolò da Prato, Bishop of Ostia,³ who reached Florence in March, worked energetically in the interests of peace, but his endeavours were frustrated by the machinations of the *Neri*, who by stigmatising the *Bianchi* as Ghibellines alienated from them many of the lower orders; and by alleging that the Cardinal had Ghibelline sympathies, lessened his influence. The Cardinal finding that he could achieve nothing anathematised the Florentines and departed. "Since you choose to be at war and under a curse," said he to them on leaving, "and will neither hear nor obey the messenger of God's Vicar, nor be at rest nor peace among yourselves, remain with the curse of God and His Holy Church upon you."⁴

After the Cardinal was gone, Florence was in an evil plight.

¹ Dino Compagni, p. 282.

² His followers included his old enemies the Cavalcanti and Lottieri della Tosa, Bishop of Florence.

³ The cardinal in Memmi's fresco of the Church Militant in the Spanish Chapel is said to be a portrait of Niccolò da Prato.

⁴ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 69.

Street brawls were incessant, armed encounters between some families took place day and night, and the lower orders hardly knew for whom or for what they were fighting.¹ There had been a split among the Cerchi family (we now read of White Cerchi and Black Cerchi), and the Cavalcanti had become the recognised leaders of the *Bianchi*. Rosso della Tosa² led one section of *Neri*, while the other under Corso Donati, feigning an attack of gout for a while, held sullenly aloof from the struggle. Most of the *popolani grassi*, notably the Alberti, Albizzi, Ricci and Strozzi (names soon to figure more prominently), threw in their lot with the *Bianchi*, but the Medici were stanch *Neri*.³

At first fortune favoured the *Bianchi*, and they appeared to be on the eve of a complete victory over their opponents, when on June 10th, Ser Neri Abati, the prior of S. Piero Scheraggio, set fire to a house near Or San Michele. There was a strong north wind blowing, the fire spread and did enormous damage, until "all the marrow and yolk and the most precious places of the city were burned, and the palaces, towers and houses that were consumed numbered more than 1,700."⁴ The Cavalcanti and Gherardini were the greatest sufferers, as almost the whole of their property perished in the flames. Indeed the losses sustained by many old noble families were so great that the final extinction of their supremacy has been said to date from this conflagration.⁵

This incident healed for a time the breach between the two factions of the *Neri* party, who still further improved their position by driving the Cavalcanti and Gherardini into exile. They were now so strong that they contemplated effecting what had all along been their ultimate aim, namely, the repeal of the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*, and they would probably have succeeded had not their attention been unexpectedly diverted. Cardinal Niccolò had not failed to report to the Pope the indifference with which the Florentines had treated his authority, and Benedict was much incensed. He cited Corso Donati, Rosso della Tosa, and other *Neri* leaders to appear before him at Perugia under pain of excommunication. They obeyed the

¹ A few months later the office of *podestà* had to be put in commission, as, owing to the disorderly state of the city, no foreigner could be found to accept it (Villani, ii. 177).

² His chief supporters were Pazzino de' Pazzi, Geri Spini and Betto Brunelleschi.

³ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 71. Trollope (i. 298) says that the *popolani grassi* were mainly *Neri*, but this is inconsistent with Villani's account.

⁴ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 71.

⁵ Gino Capponi, i. 131.

summons, and took with them an escort of 500 horsemen. The *Bianchi* and Ghibelline exiles, at the instigation of Cardinal Niccolò, seized the opportunity to attempt to possess themselves of their native city and overthrow the *Neri* government. They collected an army some 11,000 strong and marched to Lastra, where they encamped on the night of 19th July. On the following day a force of 1,200 effected an entrance into Florence through the Porta San Gallo, expecting that they would be reinforced by the whole *popolo minuto*, but in this they were disappointed. The traditional hatred of the people for the Ghibellines was stronger than their attachment to the *Bianchi*; consequently Florence showed a united front, and the assailants were expelled with ease. They fled to Lastra, and the main body of the army became infected with panic and dispersed.

No doubt there were some grounds for the action of the people at this juncture. A close relationship had sprung up between the exiled Ghibellines and the exiled *Bianchi* which was affecting their colleagues within the city. Thus a reversion to the old factions was taking place—the *Bianchi* and Ghibellines were becoming assimilated on the one hand, and the *Neri* and Guelphs on the other. Nevertheless the older party watchwords had entirely lost their original signification. Not only was the struggle between Church and Empire a thing of the past, but the Church was now in league with the so-called Ghibellines against the so-called Guelphs. This last encounter was, in fact, one between the *fuorusciti* on the one hand, and a heterogeneous assemblage of *grandi* and *popolani*, *Bianchi* and *Neri*, on the other. Much of the civil strife that took place about this time involved no principle and not always even an intelligible motive. It seems to have sprung from that spirit of lawlessness which, as we have seen, was born of racial antipathies and fostered by struggles between feudalism and freedom.

The *Neri* had now the government of Florence in their hands, and they proceeded to complete the subjection of their rivals by attacking the castles in the *contado* in which any of them had taken refuge¹ (1305). Having expelled such of them as had taken refuge in smaller asylums, the Signory determined to lay siege to Pistoja, where a large number of them had congregated.

¹ The first castle reduced was called "Stinche," and its occupants were the first prisoners lodged in a new prison, which was consequently called "Stinche." This prison stood on the site of the Accademia Filarmonica and the Pagliano Theatre (Horner, i. 337).

This was a more serious undertaking, and the assistance of Lucca was called in. The army of the allies was placed under the command of Robert, Duke of Calabria, the eldest son of the King of Naples. The unfortunate city was blockaded for eleven months, at the end of which time (1306) it was forced by starvation to capitulate, and its walls were destroyed. The siege is remarkable for the inhumanity both of the attacking and of the defending forces. When food was running short the garrison turned out of the city all women, children, and men who were unable to bear arms. The enemy having cut off the noses and otherwise maimed and disfigured these miserable outcasts, drove them back to the city, under the walls of which they were allowed to die within sight of their friends and relations.¹

Pope Clement V. had endeavoured to befriend the Pistoians by ordering the Florentines to discontinue the siege, but they disregarded his mandate; thereupon he sent an army into Florentine territory (1307) to chastise them for their disobedience, but its operations were thwarted by a Florentine force under the gonfalonier, Ardingo de' Medici.² The city was once more laid under an interdict, but this time, instead of treating it with her customary indifference, she replied by levying a heavy tax on all ecclesiastical property. The monks of the Badia closed their doors against the tax-collector, and endeavoured to incite the people to aid them by ringing their bells. Popular sympathy was, however, all the other way, and a mob broke into and pillaged the convent, and, by order of the Government, the campanile was reduced to half its height.³ This was the third time within six years that Florence had been placed under an interdict. Though in theory a warm supporter of the Church, she never scrupled to set its decrees at defiance when it was to her interest to do so. And like other Italian cities, she was less ready to treat the papacy with respect since its removal to Avignon.

As soon as the siege of Pistoja (1306) was ended, the people of Florence took steps for the maintenance of the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*, which seemed to be again in danger. For the last two or three years the nobles had been removing their names

¹ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 82.

² Ardingo de' Medici was the first of his family admitted to the Signory. He was prior in 1291, 1313, and 1316, and gonfalonier in 1296 and 1307. The family must have held a good position at this time, as Ardingo married a Bardi, and his son Francesco an Adimari. (Litta.)

³ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 89.

from the Trade Guilds, and "it seemed to the *popolani* that the rich and powerful had become presumptuous on the strength of their victories over the *Bianchi* and the Ghibellines."¹ Accordingly the reorganisation of the militia companies, which had been commenced by Cardinal Niccolò da Prato, was completed. New banners bearing the arms of Charles of Anjou (the recognised champion of the Guelph cause) were assigned to the nineteen gonfaloniers—on account no doubt of the recent Ghibelline scare—and the populace, in order to free themselves from the disintegrating influence of the *Bianchi* and *Neri* feud, determined to adopt the name of "The good Guelph people."² The most important measure now (1307) passed was the appointment of an "Executor of Justice," whose duty it was to enforce the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*.³ He was to hold office for six months, and not only no Florentine, but no Tuscan could hold the office.

All these measures for safeguarding the power of the people were, however, rendered for a while unnecessary by a recurrence of dissensions among the nobles.⁴ A belief, probably well grounded, was spreading that Corso Donati aimed at the lordship of Florence. "It was alleged that his extraordinary mode of life, the great number of bullies and ruffians that he kept about him, his house ever open to all sorts of people, his immoderate munificence, his various friendships with many Italian despots and princes, and, in short, as is always the case when people begin to put a bad interpretation on things, that his mien, his style of speech, his noble bearing, his gait and every gesture, word and movement, savoured of sovereignty."⁵ And the belief was strengthened when he took for his third wife a daughter of Ugucione della Faggiuola, who was one of the most thorough-going Ghibellines in Italy. A formal indictment, charging him with conspiring with Ugucione and other Ghibellines for the betrayal of the people and overthrow of the Government, was lodged with the *podestà*, and within an hour he was condemned to death. A strong force was at once despatched to his house at S. Piero Maggiore to carry out the sentence.⁶ Although the time

¹ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 87.

² Napier, i. 403.

³ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 87.

⁴ The split seems to have been on the old lines. The Rossi, Bardi, Frescobaldi, Tornaquinci, and Buondelmonti followed Corso Donati, while the Rosso della Tosa party and the great bulk of the *popolani* opposed him. Napier, i. 405-6.

⁵ Ammirato, i. 402.

⁶ His house was in the street now called the Via Condotta.

had been short, Corso had barricaded the streets in the vicinity, and held the authorities at bay for the greater part of the day, expecting aid from within and without the city. When he found that no assistance was coming, either from his partisans or his father-in-law, although suffering from gout, he mounted his horse, and cutting his way through his assailants fled towards the Casentino. He was pursued and captured by a troop of cavalry at Robezzano, and led back towards Florence. On the way, having failed to effect his release by bribery, and determined not to undergo the ignominy of a public execution, he flung himself from his horse outside the convent of San Salvi, and was despatched by the lance of one of his captors. "Such was the end of Messer Corso, to whom his country and the *Neri* owed much good and ill fortune; and had his spirit been less restless, his memory would have been more honoured. Nevertheless, he deserves to be placed among Florence's most distinguished citizens."¹ Such is Machiavelli's estimate of him, but Dante pictures him on the road to hell as punishment for the misfortunes which he brought on Florence.² Whatever may have been his virtues, it is certain that by his death a disturbing element was removed from Florentine politics.

An event now happened which attracted the attention of the whole of Europe and promised to be of supreme importance to Italy. On November 27th, 1308, Henry of Luxemburg was elected King of the Romans, and within two years he had crossed the Alps to assume the imperial crown. The election had been brought about by the intrigues of Pope Clement V., in order to prevent the Roman crown falling to the lot of Charles of Valois, notwithstanding, it is said, a secret compact that he had made, at the time of his elevation to the papacy, with Philippe le Bel of France to further Charles' candidature.³

Henry entered Italy by the Mont Cenis pass, at the head of only 5,000 men, and on October 24th, 1310, he was at Susa. His approach occasioned but little alarm, as all parties hoped to gain something by his coming. Both Ghibellines and Guelphs

¹ Machiavelli, p. 88. Villani (lib. viii. cap. 96) speaks of him in even more laudatory terms.

² *Purgatorio*, xxiv. 84.

³ Villani, lib. viii. cap. 101. By so doing Clement saved Europe from falling under the domination of the house of Valois. Relations of Philippe le Bel occupied the thrones of Naples and Hungary, his daughter was Queen of England, and the Pope was almost his vassal. If Charles had been elected Germany and Italy would have been brought under the Valois yoke.

regarded him as a friend, the former because he was emperor, and the latter because he came with the sanction of the Church, and so the dominant faction in almost every city looked to him for support, while the exiles looked for restoration. But there were others who, while they hailed Henry's advent with joy, were actuated by loftier motives. Chief among these was Dante, whose views on the matter are eloquently stated in the *De Monarchiâ*. Though conscious that Henry had come to assert his imperial rights, they perceived that he had also assumed the rôle of pacificator. To them "the announcement of his coming sounded like the announcement of the coming of Messiah, who should compose clashing factions as a final arbiter, and readjust a jarring world."¹

With Florence however it was far otherwise. She, almost alone among the cities of Italy, viewed Henry's approach with alarm. She had little to hope for from either Empire or Church, for to the one she had ever been a bitter foe, and with the other she was in disfavour. She was suspicious of an alliance between Powers through whose enmity she had won her independence. The revival of an over-lord could not but impede her ascendancy over Tuscany, which was ever the secret motive of much of her policy. The guileless honesty of Henry was unintelligible to the clique of *Neri* Guelphs who controlled her affairs. These hard-headed men of business viewed his idealism with distrust. In their eyes his triumph meant either the re-establishment of feudalism or the recall of the exiles, and in either case their power would be at an end. Consequently when the leading Italian States, in obedience to a requisition from the Emperor, sent representatives to greet him on his arrival at Lausanne as an acknowledgment of his suzerainty, Florence was conspicuous by her absence.² She had not taken this dangerously independent step without hesitation. On the arrival of the requisition it was at first decided to comply with it; indeed the ambassadors who were to represent Florence were actually chosen and their dresses ordered.³ But when the matter was finally discussed by the Signory Betto Brunelleschi openly repudiated all allegiance to the Empire, saying that "the Emperor could not be allowed to use

¹ Baddeley, p. 58.

² It was said that but for this mark of ill-will Henry had intended to maintain the *Neri* faction in power. Villani, lib. ix. cap. 7. The requisition reached Florence in July, and Henry held his reception at Lausanne in October, 1310.

³ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 7.

such an imperious tone to the Florentines, who had nothing whatever to do with him."¹ The Signory were somewhat shocked at Betto's bluntness of speech, but they did not dissent from his reasoning, and they politely refused the Emperor's behest.

Florence was probably emboldened to take this course by her knowledge that Pope Clement was playing a double game. While encouraging Henry he was cultivating the friendship of Henry's chief opponent, King Robert of Naples.² She had a shrewd suspicion (which proved to be well grounded) that Robert would aid her in opposing Henry's progress, and that their joint action would not be altogether displeasing to the Pope. An opportunity almost immediately offered of improving her already friendly relations with King Robert (commonly known as Robert the Wise), of which she was not slow to avail herself. He had just been crowned King of Naples by the Pope at Avignon, and on his way home he stayed in Florence from September 30th to October 24th. He was lodged in the houses of the wealthy Peruzzi in the Borgo de' Greci, where he was royally entertained. A new kitchen was constructed specially for the occasion, numerous tournaments were held in his honour, and large money presents were made to him.³ Before his departure there is no doubt that a tolerably good understanding had been arrived at as to "the warding off of the Emperor," which Villani tells us was one of the objects of his sojourn.⁴ Florence now (1311) set about her self-imposed task with her wonted energy, and various measures, both of an offensive and defensive character, were taken. The walls were heightened eight cubits, and moats were dug where the circuit was incomplete.⁵ Seeing what a dangerous use might be made

¹ Ammirato, ii. 11.

² The Pope appointed Robert his Vicar General of Romagna and Ferrara on August 19th, 1310. Baddeley, p. 60.

³ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 8; Trollope, i. 322. He endeavoured, though unsuccessfully, to reunite the *Neri*, who were still at strife among themselves. It was clearly to his interest that concord should prevail in Florence if she was to be an effectual bulwark against imperial designs.

⁴ How far the crafty monarch disclosed his policy may be doubted. It is certain that he aimed at making himself master of Italy, and he would have thrown over Florence had it suited his interest to do so. Before many months had passed, when alarmed at rumours that the murder of Conradin was to be avenged on Naples, he was contemplating a matrimonial alliance between his son and a daughter of the Emperor. Florence accidentally discovered this, and in June, 1311, she wrote him a very sharp remonstrance. Baddeley, p. 89.

⁵ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 10.

of her exiles, she permitted them to return on the payment of a small fine, excepting a certain number who were expressly excluded (of whom Dante was one) and who were declared for ever incapable of pardon.¹ And before this her agents had been busy counteracting Henry's work in North Italy, where, it was said, "he came down, descending from city to city and bringing peace to each as if he were an angel of God."² Turin, Asti, Vercelli, and Novara opened their gates to him. All of the cities of Lombardy except Genoa and Venice were present by their Syndics when he was crowned with the Iron Crown of Italy, in the Church of San Ambrogio at Milan, on January 6th, 1311. Como and Piacenza were forced to receive back their Guelph, and Brescia and Mantua their Ghibelline, exiles.³ But before long the attitude of Lombardy towards him was changed by Florentine gold and Florentine intrigue. By May Milan, Crema, Cremona, Lodi and Brescia were in revolt, and the reduction of the last-named city to obedience delayed for some months his southward progress.⁴ On June 1st, a league between all the Guelph cities of Tuscany was formed, which undid by night whatever the Emperor had accomplished by day.⁵

Nevertheless, Henry made another attempt to conciliate Florence. In October he sent Pandolfo Savelli (a member of the great Roman house), Bishop Botronto, and other distinguished personages as his ambassadors for the purpose. On reaching Lastra they were officially informed that they would not be received in Florence, and as they did not at once depart, they were, with the connivance of the Signory, robbed by Florentine highwaymen and forced to fly for their lives.⁶ Henry, by way of retribution, placed Florence under the ban of the Empire—a mere empty form which had lost all efficacy. By the end of the year (1312) he had reasserted his authority in Lombardy, and avoiding Florence, he proceeded *viâ* Pisa and Viterbo to Rome. He crossed the Ponte Molle on May 6th, without serious opposition, and finding the Capitol, the Castle of St. Angelo, and the Tras-

¹ The amnesty was proclaimed on April 26th, 1311. Those excepted from it were called *Escettati*. Whenever a general pardon was afterwards proclaimed for the *Fuorusciti*, the clause *salvo le famiglie escettati* was always introduced. The *Escettati* at this date numbered about 900.

² Dino Compagni, p. 303.

³ Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*, 3rd. ed. (1872), vii. 308-9.

⁴ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 17.

⁵ Baddeley, 92.

⁶ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 26. See also Baddeley, pp. 94-6, for Bishop Botronto's account of this affair.

tevere occupied by the troops of King Robert and the Guelphic League, he made the Lateran Palace his headquarters. In the course of a few weeks he dislodged the enemy from the Capitol, but his access to S. Peter's was effectually barred, so the emperor's crown was placed on his head in the Church of S. John Lateran. The ceremony took place on June 29th, 1312, and was performed by Cardinal da Prato and two other legates. Shortly afterwards he returned northwards, and on reaching Arezzo he found a considerable Florentine force at the Castle of Incisa ready to dispute his progress. Having routed these, he pushed on towards Florence, and if he had assaulted the city at once he would probably have captured it.¹ He took up his quarters at San Salvi (outside of which Corso Donati had met with his death) and invested the city; but he did not prevent large reinforcements reaching the garrison, and the prize slipped from his grasp. For six weeks he contented himself with devastating the surrounding country. He then raised the siege, and marching southwards, pitched his camp first at San Casciano, and subsequently at Montaperti. There is no doubt that his inaction arose from failing health, as he was suffering from a malarious fever that he had contracted at Rome. It was his intention, after leaving Florence, to invade the kingdom of Naples, but he was prevented by the progress of his malady. Having vainly sought a cure at the baths of Macereto, he went to the village of Buonconvento, where he died on August 24th, 1313.²

Henry's attempt to re-establish the supremacy of the Empire in Italy produced no permanent results, but it was, for more reasons than one, a remarkable episode. He came with a wholly inadequate force, without resources or reliable support, to achieve that which had baffled the Othos, the Fredericks, and the Henrys,³ and at his death he was at the head of a large and well-equipped army, and possessed of sufficient money to maintain it. This he had accomplished by energy, wisdom, and nobility of character. "He had this greatest of virtues," says

Villani, lib. ix. cap. 47.

² Buonconvento lies on the road between Siena and Monte Oliveto. The Florentines have been accused of having caused Henry's death by poison. It was said that they bribed a Dominican friar to give him a poisoned wafer when administering to him the sacrament, but there is no sort of evidence in support of the accusation. Henry was buried at Pisa, where a beautiful monument was erected to his memory in the Campo Santo. It is the work of Tino da Camaino.

³ Milman's *Latin Christianity*, vii. 308.

Villani; "he was never depressed by adversity, or puffed up by prosperity."¹ It is true that he was constrained by force of circumstances (mainly by Florentine opposition) to forego the rôle of strict impartiality that he had at first assumed, and to champion the cause of Ghibellinism, but, nevertheless, he had done much for the pacification of Italy, and the equity and clemency of his rule had won for him the cordial allegiance of many of his new subjects. He was, however, too honest for his age, and for a time he did not realise either the duplicity of Robert the Wise or the tortuous policy of Clement V. When he awoke to their true character he met their opposition openly. The one he placed under the ban of the Empire, and to the other he replied, "If God is for us, neither the Pontiff nor the Church, provided we offend not heaven, can do us any hurt."² Had he lived there can be but little doubt that he would have subjugated both Naples and Florence, and become virtual as well as titular ruler of the whole of Italy, possibly to the great advantage of the peninsula. "With Henry VII. ends the history of the Empire in Italy, and Dante's book (*De Monarchiâ*) is an epitaph instead of a prophecy."³

But an interest of a non-political character attaches to Henry's brief sojourn on Italian soil, through the hope that it awakened in Dante of a speedy return to his native city and of the regeneration of his native land. For Dante the death of the Emperor quenched every ray of light that had come for a moment into his life. It was under the influence of this hope that his celebrated letters to the princes of Italy, to the Emperor, and to the Florentines were written, and the excitement under which he was labouring must be an excuse for the extravagance of their language and the bitterness of their tone. When, as he thought, Henry was lingering too long in North Italy, he wrote to him: "Why tarriest thou? If thine own glory move thee not, let thy son's, at least, stir thee. . . . Brescia, Bergamo, Pavia, and other cities will continue to revolt until thou hast extirpated the root of the evil. Art ignorant, mayhap, where the rank fox lurketh in hiding? The beast drinketh from Arno, polluting the waters with its jaws. Knowest thou not that Florence is its name? Florence is the viper that stings its mother's breast, the black sheep that corrupts the whole flock. . . . Delay no more, but haste to slay

¹ Lib. ix. cap. 49.

² Baddeley, p. 119.

³ Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire* (1866), p. 291.

the new Goliath with the sling of thy wisdom and stone of thy might.”¹

In the previous month he had written to his fellow-citizens, whom he addressed as “Most wicked Florentines,” and to whom he insisted that the Emperor was coming on a divine mission. “Most foolish and insensate men,” said he, “ye shall succumb perforce to the Imperial eagle. Know ye not that true liberty consisteth in voluntary obedience to Divine and human laws? Yet while presuming to claim liberty, ye conspire against all laws!”² After reading these letters it is difficult to censure the Signory for including Dante among the *Escettati*. The *Divina Commedia* had not been written, and it would have required more than human prescience to recognise the greatness of the man of whom they were making an outcast, or to have had even a glimmering of the glory that his name would in after ages reflect upon the place of his birth.

While Florence was to all appearance intent only on thwarting the Emperor’s pretensions, her home affairs were in a disorderly condition. Although the turbulent Corso Donati was no more, dissensions among the nobles continued, occasioning intermittent acts of violence and bloodshed. The clique who had caused his downfall and death (Rosso della Tosa, Pazzino de’ Pazzi, Geri Spini, and Betto Brunelleschi), together with two others,³ had absorbed the government into their own hands. These six men were a self-constituted autocracy who disposed of every office, tampered with the administration of justice, and controlled both *podestà* and priors.⁴ Two of them paid the penalty of their misdeeds with their lives. Betto Brunelleschi was assassinated in February, 1310, while he was playing a game of chess, by two of the Donati, who held him mainly responsible for Corso’s death. Dino Compagni calls him “an infamous citizen,” and says that he was hated by the people because he stored up his corn till times of scarcity and then sold it at famine prices.⁵ After his death, the Donati and their friends marched by night, armed, to the convent of San Salvi, where, having disinterred the corpse of Corso

¹ From letter of April 16th, 1311, as cited by Villari, ii. p. 199.

² Cited by Villari, ii. 198.

³ Tegghiaio Frescobaldi and Gherardo Ventruia.

⁴ Dino Compagni, pp. 312, 313.

⁵ Dino Compagni, pp. 316, 317. He had persecuted the *Bianchi* to curry favour with the *Neri* and the Ghibellines because, being a deserter from their ranks, he could never hope for their forgiveness.

Donati, they held by torchlight a solemn funeral service over it, and bore it in triumph to Florence. The ceremony (which must have somewhat resembled the removal of Rustico Marignolli's corpse by the Guelphs in 1249) was held to celebrate what was regarded as an act of vengeance for Corso's death and his desertion by his friends. Pazzino de' Pazzi fell in consequence of a judicial murder that had been perpetrated at the bidding of himself and his five colleagues. They had constrained the *podestà*, apparently without cause, to order Masino Cavalcanti to be beheaded in 1309.¹ The wrong was not forgotten by the relatives of the victim, and in January, 1312, Paffiera Cavalcanti, hearing that Pazzino had gone out to try a falcon on the dry bed of the Arno near S. Croce with only one attendant, collected some friends² and rode after him. Pazzino, suspecting their object, fled towards the river, but his flight was arrested by a thrust from Paffiera's lance, and he was despatched in the water. The Pazzi and Donati, who were now reconciled, armed their followers and attacked the Cavalcanti and set fire to three of their palaces. The Tornaquinci, the Della Tosa,³ and many of the populace joined in the fray, and the city was soon in an uproar. After order had been restored the Pazzi, whose influence in the government was still paramount, procured the condemnation of forty-eight members of the Cavalcanti family, who were fined and exiled.⁴

These feuds, together with official corruption, would probably have brought about a recurrence of civil strife as serious as that which had existed before Corso Donati's death, but for the Emperor's presence in Italy. "Thus our city continues afflicted," exclaims Dino Compagni, when speaking of this period, "thus our citizens persevere in wickedness. What is done one day

¹ Dino Compagni, p. 312.

² Paffiera was aided by some of the Brunelleschi, who believed that Pazzino was concerned in the murder of Betto.

³ Rosso della Tosa, who had by force of character long ruled the *Neri* party, died in 1309. "God," says Dino Compagni, "had been expecting him a long time, for he was above 75 years old." The same historian says (p. 313) that it was he who occasioned the Guelph party to divide into *Bianchi* and *Neri*, and that he was "an enemy of the people and a friend of tyrants."

⁴ The rapid resuscitation of the Cavalcanti is so extraordinary as to cast doubt on the account of their downfall. It is said that the whole family had been driven into exile and almost all their property destroyed by fire in 1304; and yet in 1312, according to Dino Compagni, they could muster sixty men-at-arms bearing their name. No mention is made of the date of their recall.

is blamed the next. The wise are wont to say that 'a wise man does nothing to repent of,' but in this city nothing is done by anyone, however laudable it may be, that is not censured and blamed. Men kill each other regardless of law, for if a man has friends or money his crime will go unpunished. O wicked citizens, it is you who have corrupted the whole world with your bad habits and dishonest gains."¹

Two months before the Emperor's death in 1313 Florence had placed herself under the protection of King Robert of Naples for a term of five years.² It was stipulated, however, when the lordship of the city was granted to him, that his Vicar should be changed every six months and should not have the right to alter the constitution. This more than nominal surrender of independence on the part of the Republic was occasioned, not so much by fear of Henry VII. as by dissensions among her citizens. Possibly it was a wise step, and had it not been taken the Guelphs would have torn each other to pieces.³ Nor was it long before Florence had to seek aid from her lord. In 1314 Uguccione della Faggiuola (whose daughter, it may be remembered, Corso Donati had married), while in command of a Pisan army, contrived by force and strategy to capture Lucca.⁴ He had been one of the Emperor's most trusted lieutenants, and he was now regarded throughout Italy as the leader of the Ghibellines. He was a man of gigantic stature and of great strength and courage, and his many deeds of prowess on the battlefield had been magnified by an admiring soldiery into almost superhuman exploits.⁵ He was, moreover, a general and statesman of no mean order. The Florentines were filled with alarm when the news reached them that Lucca, as well as Pisa, was practically

¹ Dino Compagni proceeds to prophesy that the Emperor will punish Florence for her misdeeds. This passage brings his history to an end. Muratori considers him a better historian than Villani (Napier, i. 426), but this is not the general opinion, and, as has been stated, some critics consider his history spurious.

² Lucca, Pistoja, Prato, and Siena also made him their lord, and shortly afterwards Parma and Bologna did the same. Thus soon after the Emperor's death Robert was "master if not sovereign of two-thirds of Italy" (Baddeley, p. 123; Villani, lib. ix. cap. 56).

³ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 56.

⁴ Florence benefited indirectly, for a large number of silk-weavers fled from the violence of Uguccione's soldiers, and took up their abode in Florence. The industry directed by the Por San Maria thenceforth became more prosperous. Some of the Luccese fugitives came to England (Napier i. 435).

⁵ Ammirato, ii. 34. The leader of a cavalcade in Orcagna's fresco of the "Triumph of Death" in the Campo Santo at Pisa, is said to be a representation of Uguccione.

under the sway of a Ghibelline chief,¹ and they at once took steps to resist him. In response to urgent messages King Robert sent 300 horse under his youngest brother the Count of Gravina, and in the following year a larger troop under another brother, the Prince of Taranto, to aid them. With contingents from Bologna, Siena, Perugia, Volterra, and other places they had collected an army of nearly 60,000 men.

The allied forces left Florence on August 6th, 1315, and proceeded to relieve the little town of Montecatini, which was being besieged by Uguccione. While the two armies faced each other for several days all Italy was awaiting the result with eager interest, as it was felt that a trial of strength between Guelphs and Ghibellines was impending. On August 29th the great battle of Montecatini was fought. Although the Guelph forces outnumbered their opponents, their commander, the Prince of Taranto, was no match for Uguccione, and they were utterly routed. Their losses were very heavy, and among the killed were the Count of Gravina and members of 114 noble Florentine families.² On the other side Francesco della Faggiuola, the son of Uguccione, was among the killed, and Castruccio Castracane (the future lord of Lucca) was wounded.

This defeat, which was almost as great a disaster for the Guelphs as the battle of Montaperti, gave rise at Florence to much discontent with the Neapolitan protectorate. The Guelph or *Neri* factions, that the presence of the King's Vicar had hitherto suppressed, reappeared. The party under the leadership of Simone della Tosa sought to expel the royal vicar, but not feeling strong enough to do so, they resorted to a most mischievous expedient for curtailing his authority. This was the creation of a new Government office, the holder of which was called *Il bargello*, and to which they appointed one Lando d'Agobbio (Lando of Gubbio), a cruel miscreant, who was a mere tool in their hands. He was installed in office on the 1st of May, 1316, and a banner was given to him as badge of authority. "He stood continually at the foot of the stair of the Priors' Palace with five attendants

¹ Ammirato, ii. 36. It was always thought by the Signory that Lucca held the balance of power between Florence and Siena on the one hand and Pisa and Arezzo on the other.

² Machiavelli, in his life of Castruccio Castracane, gives the killed at 10,000, but in his history of Florence at 2,000. Probably the latter figure referred to Florentine losses alone. Machiavelli is not, however, always accurate in such matters. And see Napier, i. 141, note.

who carried headsmen's axes."¹ On a mere hint to the *bargello* citizens were dragged from their homes and, without even the form of a trial, led to immediate execution. By this man's agency the Tosinghi literally decimated their opponents. The Florentines—usually so ready to fly to arms—were now completely cowed, and no one stirred to put an end to what was a veritable reign of terror. Before long, however, the Tosinghi lost their majority on the Signory. Lando was dismissed in October, and his office remained vacant. Not the least of the *bargello's* enormities in the eyes of the Florentine traders was the issuing of some six-*danari* pieces that were only worth four *danari*. These base coins were commonly known as *bargellini*. The only good with which this iniquitous régime can be credited is the completion of the city walls from the Porta Prato to the Porta San Gallo² the reconciliation of some of the quarrelsome *grandi* families, and the recall of some of the exiles.³ Even some of the *escettati* were given the option of returning to Florence if they would pay a fine and walk in humiliation to the Baptistry and do penance for their offences. Dante refused the ignominious offer, and the letter is still extant in which he declined to enter Florence except with honour.⁴

Meanwhile events were taking place outside Florence which must be noticed, as their outcome threatened for a moment her independence. Pisa and Lucca were chafing under the despotic rule of Uguccone della Faggiuola, and it was evident that insurrections in both towns were imminent. In the hope of nipping them in the bud Uguccone seized and beheaded one of the richest and most esteemed citizens in Pisa; and his son Neri, who was acting as his lieutenant at Lucca, threw into prison Castruccio Castracane, but did not venture to order his execution. No sooner did Uguccone hear that Castruccio had been arrested than he hastened to Lucca to rid himself of a dangerous rival, and at once ordered him to be put to death. But before the sentence could be carried out the news arrived that Pisa had revolted, and he hastily returned thither to endeavour to re-establish his authority. At the same time the Lucchese populace rose in arms, rescued Castruccio from prison, and having struck off his fetters, they then and there proclaimed him lord of their city for one

¹ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 78.

² *Ib.*, cap. 77. The circuit was not even then complete.

³ Napier, i. 444.

⁴ *Ency. Brit.*, vi. 813.

year¹ Uguccione was unable to regain his supremacy at Pisa, and he and his son Neri fled to Verona, where they became fellow-refugees with Dante at the court of Can Grande della Scala.² Florence rejoiced at his overthrow, little dreaming that she had far more to fear from the new lord of Lucca.

The expulsion of Della Faggiuola in 1317 and the elevation of Castracane did not at once affect Florence, and she enjoyed a respite from foreign and domestic troubles. The King's Vicar, Count Guido da Battifolle (whose tact had contributed to the removal of the *bargello*), continued the work of pacification that had already been commenced. He was a member of the Guelph branch of the great Guidi family, he owned large estates in the neighbourhood of Florence, and he was known and respected before his appointment. He seems to have been trusted by all the warring sections of the community, and he consequently succeeded in reducing the number of family feuds. He also called in the obnoxious *bargellini*, and he issued new silver thirty-*danari* pieces, bearing the popular denomination of *Guelfi*. Under his auspices treaties were concluded with Pisa and Lucca,³ and before his departure, in 1318, he took advantage of a friendly majority on the Signory to obtain a prolongation of King Robert's lordship for another three years.

ART AND LITERATURE

1300-1318

ARCHITECTS	SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	AUTHORS
Arnolfo di Cambio	Arnolfo di Cambio	Giotto	Dante
Giotto	Giotto		G. Villani

PAINTING AND ARCHITECTURE

Among the Florentine artists who worked during the early years of the fourteenth century, one figure towers above all the rest. "Giotto is to be our theme at present—a man of vast genius, second only to Niccola Pisano among the regenerators of art, and in a large sense fairly to be accounted the father of

¹ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 78.

² Uguccione had given Dante a home at his castle of Faggiuola, in the mountains of Urbino, before 1306, and at Lucca about 1314.

³ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 82. Giovanni Villani was a member of the Government at this time, and he was also a prior in the previous year, probably when the *bargello* was dismissed.

Painting in Italy . . . his scholars established themselves in every quarter of Italy during his lifetime ; his influence was felt in all the pre-existent schools, the greater number of which adopted his style at once, while the few, of sturdier independence, yielded him proselytes, and all more or less profited by being his contemporary."¹ Cimabue had but slackened the fetters of Byzantine mannerism in which Art was bound ; Giotto burst them and cast them off for ever.

But little is known of Giotto's life. He was the son of a labourer named Bondone, and he was born at the village of Vespignano, about fourteen miles from Florence, in 1276.² He studied for a few years under Cimabue, who, recognising his genius, had carried him off from his mountain home when a lad of ten years old, and given him gratuitous instruction.³ His earliest works are said to have been painted for the Badia at Florence, but these have all perished. They must have been painted before 1295 or 1296, when, in obedience to Boniface VIII., he went to Rome.⁴ In 1300 he returned to Florence and commenced decorating the walls of the chapel in the palace of the *podestà*, now known as the Bargello. A supreme interest attaches to the fresco of Paradise on the east wall, apart from its artistic merits, inasmuch as it contains a portrait of Dante. This fresco must have been painted when he was prior, and Giotto must have been at work upon it in the Bargello when the *Bianchi* and *Neri* feud was causing the streets of Florence to run with blood. It also contains portraits of Corso Donati, Brunetto Latini, and Cardinal Acquasparta.⁵ About 1306 Giotto probably went to Assisi, where he must have remained painting in the Upper and Lower Church of S. Francis three or four years. He then returned to Florence, and it was between that date and 1317 or 1318 that he covered the walls of the Peruzzi Chapel in the Church of S. Croce with "the finest series of

¹ Lindsay, ii. 4.

² Vasari, i. 94. Baldinucci gives 1266 as the date, but this is rejected by Lord Lindsay, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, and Ruskin.

³ The pretty story of how this occurred is too well known to bear repetition.

⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle think that he painted in the Upper and Lower Churches at Assisi in 1296 and 1297, and in Rome in 1298 and 1299. Lord Lindsay holds that his work at Assisi was not done till after his frescoes in the Arena Chapel at Padua, which were commenced in 1306.

⁵ The frescoes in the Bargello were for two centuries coated with white-wash, which was only removed in 1840. The subject of parts is now with difficulty discernible. Dante's portrait has been injured by restoration.

frescoes that he ever produced."¹ His frescoes in the Medici and Bardi Chapels, and in the old Refectory of the same church, as well as the Resurrection of Lazarus and the "Noli me tangere" in the Chapel of the Bargello, must also be assigned to the same period.²

It was probably at this time that the two series of small compositions (now in the *Accademia*), representing incidents in the lives of our Saviour and S. Francis, were painted on a wardrobe in the Sacristy of S. Croce, though they may have been executed before Giotto's residence at Assisi.³ Some of these works must have been in progress when Florence was nervously watching the movements of Henry VII., or actually surrounded by his troops, or when the Cavalcanti palaces were blazing and the city on the verge of civil war. Indeed it is not improbable that Giotto was peacefully at work in S. Croce at the very moment when Pazzino de' Pazzi was being assassinated within a stone's-throw of the church.

ARNOLFO DI CAMBIO was superintending the erection of the Palazzo Vecchio, the Duomo, and other buildings until his death in 1310.

LITERATURE

DANTE'S *Inferno* is supposed to have been completed about 1314, and the *Purgatorio* before 1318, so their production was approximately synchronous with that of the Peruzzi frescoes.⁴ The fact that two such men as Giotto and Dante should have accomplished their very best work at this time goes far to substantiate Ruskin's *dictum* that it was "the culminating period in the history of the art of the middle ages."⁵ Any critical account of Dante's great works would be out of place in these

¹ Crowe and Cavalcaselle, i. 297. They were covered with whitewash from 1714 to 1841.

² Giotto also decorated, probably about the same time, the chapels of the Giugni and Tosinghi in S. Croce, but these frescoes still remain under whitewash (Crowe and Cavalcaselle, i. 303). For a vivid but discursive account of the frescoes in the Bardi Chapel, see Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence*, pp. 61-95.

³ The first series is minutely described by Lord Lindsay, who is inclined, from its style, to assign it to a later date than the S. Francis series. Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle (vol. i. p. 362), while allowing that the panels were designed by Giotto, think that they were executed by Taddeo Gaddi. If so they must have been painted later.

⁴ The *Paradiso* was produced later.

⁵ *Giotto and his Works in Padua*, p. 30.

pages. Dantesque literature, which is ever increasing, would already fill a good-sized library. An attempt to analyse in a few lines or indicate the scope of the second greatest epic in the world—of a poem in which the whole spirit of bygone centuries summed itself up and put on immortality¹—would be worse than useless.²

The work of GIOVANNI VILLANI deserves special mention, for not only is it the source from which all writers of early Florentine history have mainly drawn, but its author is the first³ of a brilliant group of historians who have added a direct and reflected lustre to the fame of their native city. In truth, Italian History owes nearly as much to Florence as does Italian Art, and in the development of both she played much the same part. Just as Pisa and Siena took the lead in the one, so Milan and Parma took the lead in the other, and just as Florence passed the former she passed the latter, and ever after held the foremost place.⁴ She became “alone and above all other states in the world, the home of historical representation in the modern sense of the phrase.”⁵

Few States can boast such an illustrious roll of mediæval and renaissance chroniclers as the following :—

G. Villani (<i>b. cir. 1275, d. 1348</i>)	History from early times to 1348
M. Villani (<i>d. 1363</i>)	1348 to 1363
Bruni (Lionardo Aretino, <i>b. 1369, d. 1444</i>)	early times to 1404
⁶ Dino Compagni (<i>d. 1324</i>)	1280 to 1312
Poggio Bracciolini (<i>b. 1380, d. 1459</i>)	early times to 1455
Machiavelli (<i>b. 1469, d. 1527</i>)	1492
Nardi (<i>b. 1476, d. 1556</i>)	1429 to 1552
Guicciardini (<i>b. 1482, d. 1540</i>)	1434 to 1509
Nerli (<i>b. 1485, d. 1536</i>)	1494 to 1537
Giannotti (<i>b. 1492, d. 1572</i>)	
Varchi (<i>b. 1502, d. 1565</i>)	1527 to 1538
Segni (<i>b. 1504, d. 1558</i>)	1527 to 1554
Pitti (<i>b. 1519, d. 1589</i>)	1494 to 1529
Ammirato (<i>b. 1531, d. 1601</i>)	early times to 1574 ⁷

¹ Symonds' *Introduction to the Study of Dante* (1890), p. 288.

² I am aware that such an omission, coupled with the fact that I have described minor works (because less known), must give an appearance of want of perspective to this history.

³ Malispini's history was probably derived from Villani's, or possibly the earlier portions of the works of both authors were taken from a common source.

⁴ Symonds, i. 230.

⁵ Burckhardt's *Renaissance in Italy* (1890), p. 73.

⁶ I have not placed Dino Compagni earlier, as the oldest codex of his chronicle was probably written in 1450. See *ante*, p. 65.

⁷ I have not included Brunetto Latini in this list, as the *Cronica* formerly attributed to him is now held to be anonymous. Among writers of lesser note, but not unknown to fame, I may mention Filippo Villani, Marchionne

Giovanni Villani tells us that he was inspired to undertake his great work during a visit to Rome, on the occasion of the first Jubilee, when some 200,000 pilgrims crowded the streets.¹ Reflecting that the glory of Rome was waning while that of his native city was waxing, he determined, he says, to relate "all the doings and the origins of the town of Florence, as far as I could collect and discover them, and to continue the acts of the Florentines and other notable things in the world in brief onwards so long as it shall be God's pleasure, hoping in whom by his grace I have done the work rather than by my own poor knowledge; and therefore in the year 1300, when I returned from Rome, I began to compile this book, to the reverence of God and Saint John and the praise of this our city of Florence."²

Considering the time at which Villani wrote, his work is far in advance of that of any of his predecessors. It is true that he does not, like Machiavelli and Guicciardini, anticipate the modern analytical method, and, when treating of the foundation of Florence and other matters anterior to his own times, he mixes fable with fact. But when he comes to contemporaneous events which extend over a period of more than half a century, and in many of which he took a prominent part,³ his narrative leaves little to be desired. He was a keen observer, and he tells of what he saw in language which is at the same time simple and vivid. Making allowance for the atmosphere of party spirit which surrounded him, he is singularly impartial. But it is as a recorder of statistical data that he is unrivalled. He has given us detailed information respecting the commercial, financial, ecclesiastical, and social affairs of Florence during the fourteenth century such as we possess of no other city in the world.⁴ His work has been aptly described as "the cornerstone of the early mediæval history of Florence."⁵

di Coppo Stefani, Piero Minerbetti, Gino Capponi (*b.* 1350, *d.* 1421), Goro Dati, and Giovanni Cavalcanti; the diarist Landucci; and the biographer Vespasiano.

¹ Giotto and Dante were in Rome at the same time.

² Symonds, i. 232.

³ He was three times Prior, he was Master of the Mint, and he was often sent on important embassies and as commissioner on military expeditions. He superintended the erection of Andrea Pisano's Baptistery gates and of the campanile of the Badia.

⁴ See G. Villani, lib. x. cap. 165, and lib. xi. cap. 92, 93, and 94. Matteo Villani also gives some valuable statistics; see lib. i. cap. 1-8, and lib. iii. cap. 106.

⁵ By Count Ugo Balzani, *Ency. Brit.*, xxiv. 228.

CHAPTER VI

1320-1340

THE GUELPH AND Ghibelline Succession—War with Milan
—CASTRUCCIO CASTRACANE—THE CONSIGLIO DEL POPOLO

THE position which Florence occupied at the beginning of the fourteenth century was a remarkable one, resembling in some respects that which England holds at the present day, and (all things considered) perhaps more surprising. Possessing a territory not larger than the county of York,¹ this little community of self-governed traders had won for itself a commercial and financial prosperity that gave it an influence out of all proportion to its size—an influence that was felt all over the civilised world. Her leading merchants, who had branch establishments in many European cities and in the East, were men of enormous wealth. Some of her manufactures, especially cloth which she had dressed and dyed, had an unrivalled reputation. Foreign potentates borrowed largely from her bankers. Her citizens, who were employed by the great mercantile houses to manage their foreign branches, displayed such intelligence in dealing with financial matters that they were often appointed masters of the mints in the countries where they were residing; and their general aptitude for affairs led to their employment in the conduct of diplomatic negotiations. This not only brought her into touch with many of the great powers, but at times enabled her to direct their policy.²

In the sphere of Art and Letters she was already supreme, and she was on the road to a position of more commanding pre-eminence than any that the world had seen since the days of Athens. In political morality, it need hardly be said, she was not one whit in advance of her contemporaries, and so, while

¹ Trollope, i. 372.

² The primary cause of her splendid position was her national character, but the perfect organisation of her trade guilds was the most important of the secondary causes.

her influence rested on the solid foundation of wealth and intelligence, it was not unfrequently increased by bribery and intrigue. There was probably less extravagance and ostentatious display among the Florentines at this period than among the Milanese, Genoese, or Venetians, or even perhaps the Pisans or Sienese.¹ Nevertheless, as was inevitable, with increased material prosperity had come a more luxurious mode of life. The simplicity of dress, food, and manners described by Villani and extolled by Dante was passing away.² Fra Francesco Pippino, who wrote in 1313, speaks of "the clothing being now remarkable for its exquisite materials, workmanship, and superfluous ornaments of silver, gold, and pearls," and he goes on to bewail the consumption of foreign wines and the general increase of ostentation.³

Such was the position of Florence when she successfully thwarted the design of the Emperor Henry VII. to subjugate Italy, and when she embarked on a no less successful but more lengthy opposition to a similar design on the part of the great house of Visconti. The foundation of the power of the Visconti dynasty had been laid by Otho, Archbishop of Milan, by whose address Matteo (his nephew) had been nominated Imperial Vicar of Milan both by the emperor and the people. Matteo Visconti was in many respects the model of a prudent Italian despot. In 1311 he succeeded in overpowering his only formidable rivals—the Guelph family of Della Torre—and from that date to 1322 (when he abdicated in favour of his son Galeazzo) he maintained his sovereignty by sagacity rather than cruelty, and extended his dominions more by craft than conquest.⁴ Ever since the death of the Emperor Henry VII. Matteo's power had been increasing, and it had now become a real menace to Florence. Other States had also cause for alarm, and when in 1318 he attempted to add Genoa to his possessions, a league was formed to thwart his designs. As he was regarded as the chief of the Ghibelline party, the States which combined against him (with Florence at their head) hoisted the Guelph banner.

The war had all the appearance of a continuation of the struggle which had commenced a century before, for the fatal

¹ In 1252 the Pisans thought, or affected to think, that the Florentines were not more civilised than Arabs (Villani, lib. vi. cap. 53). Some light is thrown on the mode of life of fashionable Siena by the sonnets of Folgore da San Gimignano (Napier, i. 578–582).

² Villani, lib. vi. cap. 69; *Il Paradiso*, xv. 97, etc.

³ Cited in Napier, ii. 542.

⁴ Symonds, i. 120.

party names which had then been coined, though they had become destitute of all rational meaning, still divided Italy into two hostile camps.¹ The *raison d'être* of the Guelph and Ghibelline feud had, it is true, disappeared—the pope was in exile at Avignon, and there was no claimant for the imperial throne—and yet the hatreds which had been engendered survived and were, if possible, more active and malignant than before. This was mainly occasioned by the merciless and mistaken policy to which each party resorted in the hour of victory of endeavouring to secure its ascendancy by banishing the bulk of its opponents. Guelph and Ghibelline exiles flocked to cities where their own parties were for the time supreme, all burning for revenge, and endeavouring to incite the States in which they had found a home to make war on those that had expelled them. There was hardly a city that did not live in dread of an attack from without and whose rulers did not know full well what was in store for them if that attack was successful. “Every danger appeared trivial in the eyes of exasperated factions when compared with the ascendancy of their adversaries.”²

Something too had been done towards perpetuating these barbarous party names and the animosities from which they sprung by a series of most trivial and absurd customs. Ghibellines wore the feathers in their caps upon one side, Guelphs upon the other. Ghibellines cut fruit at table crosswise, Guelphs straight down. Ghibellines drank out of smooth, Guelphs out of chased goblets. Ghibellines wore white and Guelphs red roses. Each party had its own mode of yawning, passing in the street, throwing dice, and its own gestures in speaking and swearing.³ One custom of the kind may still be seen in the architecture of the period. Palaces of the Ghibellines were built with swallow-tailed battlements, while those on the palaces of the Guelphs had straight tops.⁴ The impending war then, though nominally one between Guelphs and Ghibellines, was but a corollary to the struggle between the Church and the Empire. Beyond hatreds originating in persecution and stereotyped by custom it is hard to discover any

¹ Milan, Verona, and almost every city in Lombardy and Romagna, as well as Lucca and one or two other towns in Tuscany, called themselves Ghibelline; Florence, Naples, the Papal States, Siena, Perugia, and Bologna called themselves Guelph. Venice held proudly and prudently aloof, preferring a position of “contemptuous isolation” (Burckhardt, p. 65).

² Hallam's *State of Europe during the Middle Ages* (1819), i. 403. See also Ammirato, ii. 59.

³ Symonds, i. 67.

⁴ The swallow-tailed battlements are very noticeable in Verona.

intelligible line of cleavage between the two parties. The nearest approach to a dividing principle is their attachment to different forms of government. Ghibelline States were always autocracies; Guelph States were generally, but not always, republics.¹ Hence historians have frequently and not unnaturally identified Ghibellinism with tyranny and Guelphism with freedom.² But these words had a different signification in those days from what they have now, and unless this is borne in mind we shall bestow a meed of praise on the Guelphs and blame on the Ghibellines beyond what is their due. Freedom, and indeed free institutions, as we understand the words, had ceased to exist. They had been extinguished by the joint action of Guelphs and Ghibellines, as a glance backwards at the political changes which had taken place in Italy shows. We have seen how in the twelfth century numerous Commonwealths, deserving of the name, had been called into existence by the requirements of law and order, during the days of "an unarmed pontiff and absent emperor." In the thirteenth century, when popes and emperors—no longer absent and unarmed—were engaged in a deadly struggle for supremacy, these little communities managed to maintain their independence for a time, but the strife in which they were immersed had such a corrupting influence upon them that self-government was doomed. "So deep and dreadful was the discord, so utter the exhaustion that the distracted Communes were fain at last to find some peace in tyranny." This they did either by substituting a personal for a republican government, as in the petty States of Lombardy and Romagna,³ or by converting a republic into a tyrannous oligarchy without changing its outward form, as in

¹ The kingdom of Naples and the Papal States (the government of which was more despotic than any nominal despotism) were Guelph.

² M. Villani, lib. viii. cap. 24; Sismondi; Trollope, ii. 18; Napier (vol. i. p. 460) while identifying Guelphism with liberty, adds the prudent and important qualification, "as liberty was then understood."

³ Before 1320 the Este were lords of Ferrara, the Visconti of Milan, the Della Scala of Verona, the Coreggi of Parma, the Agolanti of Padua, the Polenta of Ravenna, the Manfredi of Faenza, the Ordellaffi of Forlì, the Montefeltro of Urbino, and the Malatesta of Rimini, Pesaro, and Fano. Shortly afterwards the Gonzaga ruled Mantua and the Pepoli Bologna. Symonds (vol. i. pp. 100-104) divides the Italian despots of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries into six classes. Some derived their sovereignty from the people, some from the Emperor, some from the Popes; others were *Condottieri* (like Uguccione della Faggiuola and the Sforza) who seized their dominions by force, others were sons or nephews of Popes, and lastly there were powerful citizens (like the Medici) who gradually extended an ascendancy that sprung from wealth and personal influence into a despotism.

Florence. A change of the former class was for the lower orders generally a change for the better, as it delivered them from the tyranny and anarchy of faction. The yoke of the tyrant indeed as a rule weighed more heavily on the nobles than on the people,¹ and when, as was sometimes the case, he not only restored social order, but also impartially administered justice and aggrandised his principality at the expense of its neighbours, he was the hero of the multitude.²

A change belonging to the latter class did not always bring with it any corresponding advantages. It often imperilled the stability of the government, weakened the executive, perpetuated faction, and encouraged corruption. It sufficed however to satisfy the Guelph conception of freedom. But what Hobbes told the reformers of his day might be said with still greater truth of the fourteenth-century Guelphs, "What they really demanded was not liberty but dominion."³ There can be no doubt that the Milanese under Matteo Visconti enjoyed as much liberty of individual action as the Florentines in the times of the Tosinghi cabal or the *bargello*, and much more security for life and property. Nor did it take much to satisfy Guelph aspirations for freedom. They were content with a mere nominal right to participate in the government while a few powerful families manipulated the elections and kept the real power in their own hands. The freedom with which Guelphism may truly be identified was a sentiment, a phantasm. All Guelphs were democrats by profession, but the leaders of the party were (like our own eighteenth-century Whigs) exclusive aristocrats in their habits, and when in office they were as tyrannical as the Ghibelline despots. Nor must it be supposed that there was any desire on the part of Guelph republics to aid each other in the maintenance of their nominal independence, for "the Florentine oligarchs, while they spent their last florin in opposing the Visconti, never missed an opportunity of enslaving the sister-burghs of Tuscany."⁴

It is impossible in the light of these facts to maintain that there was any great principle at stake in the coming war. Its real cause

¹ There were of course exceptions, notably such monsters as Ezzelino da Romano and Bernabò Visconti.

² Symonds, i. 74-76.

³ *Nineteenth Century Review*, January, 1902, p. 13.

⁴ Symonds, i. 75. Florence succeeded in enslaving Pisa, Pistoja, and Volterra, but failed in her repeated attempts to acquire Lucca. On one occasion, however (in 1370), Florence did aid Lucca to recover her independence.

was nothing loftier than rivalry between Florence and Milan, each of whom desired for herself the hegemony of Tuscany.

As has been mentioned, it was the attempt of Matteo Visconti to seize Genoa which occasioned the combination against him. King Robert of Naples, who regarded Genoa as a kind of link between his Italian and French possessions, sent a large force for its relief, and with aid from Florence and Bologna he compelled Matteo to raise the siege. In the following year Florence sent 1,000 horsemen into Lombardy and succeeded in freeing Cremona from the Ghibelline rule of Cane della Scala, lord of Verona. But these successes were not enough to satisfy the Guelphs, so the Pope,¹ the King of Naples, and the Signory of Florence joined in a request to Philip of Valois, brother of the King of France, to come to Italy as Imperial Vicar, for the purpose of humbling the Visconti. On hearing of what was in store for him, Matteo, deeming it prudent to act on the offensive, determined, in order to prevent the Florentines from meddling with Lombardic affairs, "to light such a fire in their house as should keep them fully occupied at home."² With this object in view he entered into a close alliance with Castruccio Castracane, whom the people of Lucca had recently elected as their lord. This remarkable man, who for a short time played such a brilliant part on the stage of Italian history, was a member of the younger branch of the great Interminelli family, and he was now thirty-eight years of age.³ He had been exiled when a youth, and it is said that he gained much military experience in England when serving under Edward I. Not only as a soldier but as a statesman he was undoubtedly the foremost man in Italy, and it is not improbable that, had he lived, he would have subjugated the whole peninsula. Machiavelli, who wrote his biography (a work which is however somewhat of a political romance), even goes the length of saying that he was not inferior to Philip of Macedon or Scipio, and that he would have surpassed them both if he had had a wider sphere of action.⁴

Castruccio was well aware that Matteo was using him as a tool, but it suited him for the present to play a second part. No sooner had an alliance been concluded between the lords of

¹ John XXI., or, as he is also called, John XXII.

² *Ammirato* ii. 60.

³ It is said that his portrait may be seen in Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco in the Riccardi Palace and in Orcagna's fresco of the "Triumph of Death" on the south wall of the Campo Santo at Pisa.

⁴ *Trollope*, i. 381.

Milan and Lucca than Castruccio, with his characteristic dash, marched into the lower Valdarno, and had made himself master of some half-dozen strongholds, and devastated the country as far as Empoli, almost before Florence was aware that war had begun. On the arrival of the news the city was panic-stricken, but, to her relief, Castruccio marched northwards to aid the Ghibelline forces that were once more laying siege to Genoa; Florence thereupon, acting with unwonted disinterestedness, feigned an attack on Lucca, and caused him promptly to retrace his steps. The Florentine and Lucchese forces came to close quarters, but no battle was fought and, as winter was at hand, hostilities were suspended.

In June of the following year (1321) Castruccio laid waste Florentine territory with impunity, which occasioned much discontent with those who were responsible for the conduct of the war. The Florentines, who were ever glad of an excuse for constitutional changes, with a view of strengthening the Government, increased the Signory by the addition of twelve *Buonomini*, two taken from each *sesto*, who were to be re-elected every six months.¹

In the following year (1322) the *podestà* and *capitano del popolo* were nominated without foreign interference, for the party that had appointed the *bargello* were sufficiently powerful to prevent the prolongation of King Robert's protectorate after its expiration in the previous year.

In 1323 Castruccio recommenced offensive tactics and laid siege to Prato, which is not more than twelve miles distant from Florence. The alarm in the latter city was naturally great, as through the treachery of Jacopo Fontabuona (a *condottiere* who had been in her pay) she was nearly destitute of troops. But the Signory did not lose nerve, and prompt measures were taken for raising an army. A lighted candle was placed on the Prato gate, and it was decreed that every citizen liable to serve who was not under arms before it had burned out, should be liable to lose a limb. A general reprieve was also granted to all exiled bandits who should at once join the Florentine army at Prato, and no less than 4,000 "ferocious fellows, fit to be employed in any desperate enterprise,"² availed themselves of the offer. The result was that an army of 1,500³ horse and 20,000 foot was

¹ Napier, i. 463. It should be remembered that the priors only held office for two months.

² Ammirato, ii. 79.

³ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 214. Napier gives 2,500 horse.

brought into the field. Castruccio, whose forces did not number more than some 650 horse and 4,000 foot, not venturing to give battle, retreated under cover of night towards Lucca. Next morning there was an angry dispute among the Florentine commanders as to whether they should content themselves with having saved Prato or pursue the enemy. The captains who belonged to the *grandi*, remembering Montaperti—if not from less worthy motives—were for returning to Florence; while the *popolani* captains advocated pursuit and accused the nobles of cowardice and treachery. They were unable to agree, and messengers were sent referring the matter to the Signory, who were equally undecided, and only directed an advance after every window in the Palazzo Pubblico had been broken by a mob of boys! The nobles, however, either from a sense of the gravity of the situation, or from secret Ghibelline leanings, contrived, by telling the bandits that the Signory had no intention of granting them the promised pardon, to procure the revocation of the order. The 4,000 ruffians instantly left the army and marched towards Florence for the purpose of compelling the Government to keep faith with them, whereupon the Signory, seeing the danger to which Florence was exposed, commanded an immediate return of the army.

When thus strengthened the Signory openly avowed their intention of breaking their promise, and refused to grant to the bandits the pardon which they had earned.¹ Accordingly these ill-used ruffians determined to attempt to obtain what was their due by force, and it was arranged, with the connivance of the *grandi*, that some 1,500 or 1,600 of them should break into the city through the Porta San Gallo on the night of August 10th. The plot was discovered and frustrated, and it was found that a very large number of the nobles were implicated, but no one ventured to publicly accuse them. A new method of secret indictment was thereupon devised, by means of which three members of influential families—Amerigo Donati, Tegghia Frescobaldi, and Letteringo Gherardini—were fined 2,000 lire each and banished for six months.² Many more condemnations could have been obtained, but the conspiracy was so widespread that it was thought prudent to hush the matter up.

¹ Whether this breach of faith was preconceived (in which case the nobles are less culpable), or whether it was the result of the subsequent conduct of the bandits is not clear.

² Villani lib. ix. cap. 219.

A general sense of insecurity, springing from several sources, now pervaded the city. Castruccio Castracane was daily becoming more powerful. The nobles were discontented and were in correspondence with the still more discontented exiles. And the bi-monthly election of priors kept the whole community in a state of almost chronic excitement. In order to remove this last cause of unrest, and at the same time render the government more stable, an important constitutional change was introduced. It was now provided that twenty-one times as many persons as were required for office at the same time should be elected together, and that their election should be held once in every forty-two months. The names of the elected candidates were put into a bag (*borsa*), from which the names of those to serve as priors were drawn every two months.¹ This electoral device (known as *Squittino*²) was very popular, as it brought a large number of citizens into public life, but under its influence the *status* of the Signory deteriorated, and it was not infrequently corruptly used by party chiefs.³

Meanwhile Castruccio was unwearied in his endeavours to extend his territory. He plotted, though unsuccessfully, for the acquisition of both Florence and Pisa by treachery, and in May, 1325, he purchased Pistoja from Filippo Tedici for 10,000 florins and the hand of his daughter Dialta. It was obvious that if Florence was to maintain her independence his ambitious career must be checked. Accordingly, with the aid of her Guelph allies, she collected a force of some 2,500 cavalry and 20,000 infantry, which she placed under the command of a Spaniard, Ramondo da Cardona, who proved to be neither competent nor trustworthy.

On June 25th, this army, which was one of the finest ever put into the field by Florence, marched out of the city, headed by the *carroccio* and *martinella*, towards Pistoja. There they found the lord of Lucca in command of a strong garrison, but he was too wary to be tempted out of the city, and he dryly remarked, in answer to the enemy's taunts, that "it was not the

¹ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 229. It was a mode of election that prevailed in other places (Napier, i. 473).

² It was first called *Imborsazione*. It seems that the names of those who had served were returned to the bag, but no one was re-eligible who had been in office during the preceding twenty-four months.

³ Within two years of the adoption of the *Squittino* the Bordoni family were suspected of having tampered with the drawings from the *borsa*, which was in consequence twice opened and refilled (Villani, lib. ix. cap. 271).

right time." The Florentines contented themselves for a few days with running *pallio* races under the walls of Pistoja, and with other amusements intended to insult the besieged garrison, and then, acting under orders from the Signory, they broke up their camp and marched towards Lucca. Having captured the town of Altopascio they took up a singularly ill-chosen position a few miles further on. Castruccio was not slow to take advantage of their mistake. He at once led his forces out of Pistoja and pursued them, but he contrived to postpone a battle until reinforcements, under Azzo Visconti, which he was expecting, were at hand. His allies appeared in sight on September 23rd, when he induced the Florentines to commence the attack at the very time and point that were most advantageous to him, and before long he had won the day. The *carroccio* was captured, Ramondo was taken prisoner, and his forces were completely routed. It is said that the cavalry displayed little courage but that the infantry (most of whom were Florentines) fought bravely.¹ There can be but small doubt that Ramondo courted defeat, in the hope that Florence might be constrained by misfortune to make him her lord.² He had, too, been debilitating his army in order to feather his own nest by assigning to rich Florentines perilous and irksome duties, from which he relieved them on receipt of a bribe.³ This was the third great battle in which Florence and her Guelph allies had been completely defeated.⁴

In a few days' time Castruccio's army was outside the walls of Florence, having burned crops and houses, and ruthlessly devastated the country on their march. In the eyes of lovers of early Italian Art the damage that was then done will be regarded as incalculable. A very large number of houses around Florence at this time, Ammirato tells us, contained paintings of remarkable excellence, "the result partly of the natural taste of the citizens (who having by industry made large fortunes in trade were wont to spend money on building magnificent dwellings), and partly of the number and genius of the artists who were then living, so that Castruccio had a rich field on which to vent his

¹ As the cavalry were drawn from the nobles, it is probable that their sympathies were with their Ghibelline opponents.

² Machiavelli, p. 93.

³ Symonds, i. 143, note; Napier, i. 482.

⁴ The other two were Montaperti and Montecatini. The only important Guelph victory was over the Aretines at Campaldino. When Altopascio is spoken of as a battle between Guelphs and Ghibellines, those terms are of course used in the modified sense previously explained.

fury.”¹ The enemy remained outside Florence for some days, and repaid in kind the insults that they had received at Pistoja. Races were run from the city walls to their camp at Peretola (a village about two miles from Florence) for prizes to be provided out of the prospective loot of the city.² But so cowed were the Florentines that no sortie was made, either to check this insolence or to protect the surrounding country, indeed “they behaved themselves like a people lost and undone, and abandoning all sense of honour they were intent only on the safety of the city.”³ Castruccio made no serious attempt to take Florence and on November 10th he entered Lucca in triumph. The procession was headed by prisoners of lesser note with bare heads and hands crossed and tied upon their breasts.⁴ Then came the Florentine *carroccio* with the banner of the Republic trailing in the dirt, followed by knights, captains, and other prisoners of higher rank. Castruccio, on a magnificent charger, rode at the head of his victorious army, and he was received at the city gate by an assemblage of clergy, nobility, and high-born dames.

The remaining weeks of the year 1325 were some of the most disastrous and humiliating through which Florence had ever passed.⁵ Castruccio returned into her territory, taking castles and sacking villages at his pleasure. He occupied Signa,⁶ pillaged Prato, laid siege to Montemurlo, and wasted the greater part of the Florentine *contado*. The Signory “seeing that everything was going against Florence and in favour of her enemies,”⁷ and not feeling equal to combat these misfortunes single-handed, conferred on Charles, Duke of Calabria, the son of Robert the Wise, King of Naples, the lordship of Florence for ten years. In consideration of an annual stipend of 100,000 golden florins, he

¹ Ammirato, ii. 112.

² There were horse races, foot races, and races for prostitutes (Villani, lib. ix. cap. 317).

³ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 320.

⁴ Nothing mortified the prisoners so much as being compelled to bear torches as offerings to S. Martin, the patron saint of Lucca, on whose festival the triumphal entry was made.

⁵ Trollope, i. 415. Some of Florence's richest citizens sustained losses in a foreign land in 1326. The great firm of Bardi, who had an agency in England, had their London house pillaged and burned by a mob (Villani, lib. x. cap. 8). The cause of this outrage is said to have been the unpopularity of the Florentine bankers in London through the repayment to them by Edward II. of large sums advanced by them to his father (Peruzzi, p. 177).

⁶ While at Signa he coined silver pieces called *Castruccini*.

⁷ Ammirato, ii. 120.

undertook to reside in Florence for thirty months during his term of office, and to provide 400 transalpine horsemen. In time of war he was bound to maintain 1,000 horsemen, and he was to receive a double stipend. It was also stipulated that he should not in any way change the form of the constitution.

On May 17th, 1326, the Duke's Vicar, Walter de Brienne, Duke of Athens, arrived in Florence with 400 cavaliers, and the Duke of Calabria himself reached the city with a still larger force in the following July. Between these dates Castruccio had again brought his army to the very gates of Florence, but had failed to provoke the citizens to attack him. While there it is said he entertained a wild scheme of flooding the city by means of a dam across the Arno, but he was dissuaded by his engineers from attempting to carry it out.

Notwithstanding the terms of his appointment, the rule of the Duke of Calabria was something more than nominal. He demanded and, after some hesitation on the part of the people, obtained the power of appointing all public officers, from the priors downwards; of recalling exiles, notwithstanding any laws to the contrary; and of making peace or war. Shortly after his arrival, Siena, San Miniato al Tedesco, San Gimignano, Colle, and Prato also, made him their lord, thus largely extending the power of the house of Anjou in central Italy. His influence, however, was not to remain long unchecked. A counteracting force now appeared on the scene in the person of the excommunicated Emperor Louis (contemptuously referred to by Guelph historians as "the Bavarian"), who came to enforce his claim to Cæsar's crown in the teeth of papal opposition.¹

He entered Italy in February, 1327, with only 600 horsemen, but an army was at once provided for him by the Ghibelline chiefs of Lombardy.² He was, too, warmly welcomed by that large and zealous section of the Franciscans (known as the Fraticelli or Spirituals) who had been declared schismatics by the rapacious and worldly Pope John XXII.³ Some of the keenest intellects

¹ Louis had been elected Emperor after the death of Henry VII. in 1314, but his claim was disputed by Frederick of Austria, and war between them ensued, which lasted till 1324. Frederick was supported by the Church, and the Pope excommunicated his rival, maintaining that no one had the right to assume the title of King of the Romans without papal sanction (Creighton, i. 38).

² The lords of Milan, Mantua, Verona, and Ferrara.

³ The policy of John XXII. had occasioned a serious schism in the Church. For many years past the Franciscan Order had been divided into two parties, one of whom held that the possession of property was sinful, and that the higher

in Europe were contending for the righteousness of his cause.¹ But he found his most useful ally in Castruccio Castracane, and he was guided by no other counsellor during his sojourn in Italy. He was crowned King of the Romans in Milan on May 31st, 1327, and then marched southward, and in October he captured Pisa. He returned to Lucca, and on the feast of S. Martin he created Castruccio duke of that city, and conferred on him the lordships of Pistoja and Volterra and the bishopric of Luini.²

The Duke of Calabria left Florence on December 28th, 1327, for Naples, to aid in defending his father's dominions. His fifteen months' rule had cost the Florentines 900,000 golden florins, and he had done little or nothing towards reducing Castruccio's power. In spite of his urbanity and impartial administration of justice, his departure was not regretted, for his lack of military ability, coupled with the costliness of his government, had made him, on the whole, unpopular.

Louis went to Rome, where he was crowned emperor on January 16th, 1328, and in the August following he returned northwards, intending to combine his forces with those of Castruccio for an attack on Florence, which Florence was ill prepared to resist. The combination was, however, hindered by the arrival at Corneto of a fleet under Peter of Aragon, King of Sicily. The delay was short, but it was sufficient to save Florence, for on September 3rd Castruccio Castracane died from over-exertion in the summer heat. His brilliant career certainly seems to justify much of the praise that has been lavished upon him. It was said of him that he never committed a rash act, and that all his plans were so carefully thought out that "victory attended him like a shadow."³ From a soldier of fortune he had raised himself to be Duke of Lucca, Lord of Pisa, Pistoja, Volterra, and of much of the Genoese Riviera, and at his death he was courted or dreaded by every Italian potentate.

life was only to be found in penury and squalor, while the other had modified the rules laid down by their saintly founder so as to harmonise with the growing wealth, learning, and importance of their Order. Celestine V. had striven to hold together the contending parties, but Pope John pronounced the Fraticelli heretics (Creighton, i. 39). The Pope's action was mercilessly criticised by Michele da Cesena and William of Occam, "the invincible doctor." This schism much strengthened the Ghibelline cause in Italy.

¹ Notably Marsiglio of Padua in his *Defensor Pacis*, a work which "stands on the very threshold of modern history as a clear forecast of ideas which were to regulate the future progress of Europe" (Creighton, i. 46). His cause was also advocated by John of Jandun.

² Not long afterwards Castruccio contrived by intrigue to acquire the lordship of Pisa.

³ Ammirato.

Two months after the death of Castruccio, Charles, Duke of Calabria died, "so that in a short space of time the Florentines were freed from the rule of the one and from the fear of the other."¹ They at once set themselves to the task of remodelling their constitution, which had got out of working order during Charles' sway. The changes finally adopted, which were very elaborate, had for their object the establishment of a really democratic government, from which all Ghibellines were to be excluded.

The "General Council" and the Councils known as "The Hundred," "The *Credenza*," and "The Ninety" were abolished, and were replaced by two new ones. The first of these, called the *Consiglio del popolo*, comprised 300 citizens drawn exclusively from the ranks of the people, and was presided over by the *capitano del popolo*; the second, called *Consiglio Comune*, numbered 250 members,² half of whom were nobles, was presided over by the *podestà*. No resolution of the Signory became law until it had been ratified by both Councils. The principle of the *Squittino* was retained, but its form was modified. A list of all Guelph citizens over thirty years of age, who did not belong to the nobility, and were considered fit for the office of prior, was drawn up by the gonfalonier, and the outgoing priors with two assessors from each *sesto*. Three similar lists were also prepared; one by the gonfaloniers of companies with two assessors for each company; one by the captains of the *Parte Guelfa* and their council; and one by the five officers of commerce assisted by two consuls from each of the seven *Arti Maggiori*. These four lists were submitted to a board of ninety-eight members,³ who voted by ballot on each name in turn, and all names were rejected that did not receive at least sixty-eight votes. The names of all those who had been duly approved by the ninety-eight were put into the election bags, from which the names of those who were to serve as priors were drawn every two months. The *buonomini* and gonfaloniers of companies were drawn for every four months from lists of names that had been similarly prepared.⁴

¹ Machiavelli, p. 95.

² Reumont gives 350. See *Tavole Cronologiche*, sub anno 1328.

³ This board consisted of the gonfalonier and priors, the *buonomini*, the gonfaloniers of companies, two consuls elected by the twelve greater guilds, and six assessors from each *sesto* (Napier, i. 527-528).

⁴ The consuls of the greater guilds were elected in much the same way.

The election bags were replenished every two years, the names of those who had not been drawn for office being allowed to remain. The preparation of these lists and the drawings gave rise, as will be seen, to grave abuses which occasioned disorder and bloodshed. For the present (1329), however, popular discontent was allayed, and the Government turned its attention to foreign affairs. The movements of Louis of Bavaria were occasioning the Signory no little uneasiness. He was within measurable distance of obtaining possession of Florence by treachery, but the conspiracy was divulged by some of his agents. Giovanni del Saga, to whom the city was to have been delivered, was promptly arrested and "planted," *i.e.* buried alive, head downwards.

Castruccio Castracane's abilities as a ruler had not descended to his children, and the Signory endeavoured to profit by the disturbances that arose in some of his dominions after his death. The Pistoians applied to Florence for aid to enable them to restore order, and Jacopo Strozzi, with a bodyguard, was despatched for the purpose, to whose rule they voluntarily submitted. Although Pistoja remained nominally a free city, she was never afterwards independent of Florentine control.

The affairs of Lucca were in still greater confusion. Castruccio's three sons had been expelled from the city by Louis of Bavaria, who sold it for 22,000 florins to Francesco Castracane, a kinsman of Castruccio's, from whom it was seized by a band of German troopers that had been in Louis's service, but had mutinied for want of pay, and were now known as the *Compagnia del Ceruglio*. Florence might have purchased the city at this time for the insignificant price of 80,000 florins, and she had cause to bitterly regret that she did not do so. Giovanni Villani, who, as a member of the Signory, warmly advocated the purchase, can only explain the action of his colleagues by suggesting that "whom God hates he deprives of reason."¹ The German company being unable to conclude a bargain with Florence, and being anxious to return home, thereupon sold Lucca to Gherardino Spinola, a Genoese exile, for 30,000 florins. The Florentines, in dudgeon, refused even to treat with Spinola, and resolved to take by force what they had neglected to acquire by contract. Their army laid siege to Lucca on October 5th, and remained outside the walls till the following February, 1330,

¹ Villani, lib. x. cap. 143.

when it was forced to retire on the arrival of troops which had been sent by King John of Bohemia, to whom Spinola had offered the lordship of the city.

The position which King John held in Italy at this time was very remarkable. He was the son of the Emperor Henry of Luxemburg, and he possessed many of his father's virtues. He was handsome, chivalrous, and eloquent, and he soon became both popular and respected. When he crossed the Alps at the end of 1330 he seems to have done so without any view to personal aggrandisement. He expressly disclaimed his father's imperial pretensions, and his previous conduct in France and Germany warrants the belief that his disclaimer was honest. He accepted the lordship of Brescia, whose citizens wanted a ruler unentangled with their party quarrels, and his rule was so conspicuously benign that Cremona, Bergamo, Pavia, Vercelli, and Novara almost immediately afterwards voluntarily submitted to him. Before long Parma, Modena, and Reggio followed their example, and now Spinola was ready to cede Lucca to him.¹

King John's sudden rise to power occasioned both jealousy and alarm throughout Italy, and brought about a combination of strangely discordant elements. A league was formed between the Ghibelline Despotisms of Milan, Verona, Mantua, and Ferrara, and the Guelph States of Naples and Florence, with the double object of expelling King John from Italy and of distributing his dominions among the contracting parties.² His fortunes soon after (1333) began to wane, and some of the cities that had welcomed him as their lord revolted. Without making an effort to regain his supremacy, he sold his remaining dominions and quitted Italy with a diminished reputation.³ The only one of these transactions which affects the history of Florence is the disposition of Lucca, the *de facto* government of which King John sold to the Rossi, a powerful Parmesan family, while retaining for himself the suzerainty.

After King John's departure conferences were held between the parties to the League as to the partition of his quondam principalities, but at the end of two years nothing had been

¹ Sismondi's *Italian Republics* (London, 1832), p. 141. Villani, lib. x. cap. 169 and 174.

² It was arranged that Azzo Visconti, lord of Milan, should have Cremona, and Mastino della Scala, lord of Verona, Parma. Reggio and Modena were respectively allotted to the lords of Mantua and Ferrara, and Lucca to Florence.

³ He was killed at the battle of Cressy in 1346.

effected. Florence was, however, satisfied with the assurance of Mastino della Scala, lord of Verona, that as soon as he had dispossessed the Rossi, he would hand Lucca over to her, but, says Villani, "he broke his promise like a felon and a traitor."¹ It seems probable that he had conceived the idea of making himself lord of Tuscany—indeed he may have aimed at nothing less than the crown of Italy.² He put off the fulfilment of his engagement on various pretexts, until, in 1335, Florence, suspecting his designs and tired of waiting, formally demanded that Lucca should be handed over to her, and offered to pay him whatever sum the acquisition of the city had cost him. Mastino thereupon named 300,000 florins, supposing that as Florence had refused, only six years before, to purchase the city for 80,000, she would at once reject his offer.³ To his surprise she accepted his terms without demur, so abandoning further dissimulation, he told the Florentine ambassadors plainly that he did not want gold, and that Florence should not have Lucca unless she would undertake to remain neutral while he was attacking her ally Bologna. The ambassadors indignantly refused the proposal, and before they had reached home hostilities between Florence and Verona had commenced.

Florence was at this time in a strong and prosperous condition. She had recovered from the disastrous effects of the battles of Montecatini and Altopascio, and she was the sovereign or friend of almost every state in Tuscany.⁴ In 1333, the Florentines, as was their wont when undisturbed by foreign or domestic troubles, amused themselves with all kinds of festivities, and for a whole month about 800 artisans in gay attire paraded the streets with music and dancing. All such joyous demonstrations were, however, rudely ended by a terrific storm which commenced on November 1st in that year, and lasted for ninety-six hours, occasioning the Arno to overflow its banks. Almost the whole city was under water to a depth of four feet, the city walls gave way, and very many houses fell. Three out of the four bridges were destroyed,⁵ and the statue of Mars, at the foot of which Buondelmonte was murdered, was hurled into the river and disappeared for ever. Only 300 lives were lost, but the damage to property was

¹ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 40. ² Napier, i. 566. ³ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 44.

⁴ In 1330 she had acquired the important stronghold of Montecatini, and in 1335 the towns of Bicino, Cenina, Galatrone, Rondine, and La Torricella voluntarily tendered to her their allegiance.

⁵ The Ponte alle Grazie was the only one that escaped.

enormous.¹ The minds of the Florentines were much exercised as to whether or not they should regard this calamity as a judgment of God on them for their wickedness, but they were much consoled by a letter from the King of Naples, in which he reminded them that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."²

The new constitution had not worked as well as was expected. Many citizens of character and position found themselves, through a corrupt use of the *squittino*, excluded from office, and towards the end of 1335 disturbances were expected. The dominant faction, whose practices had occasioned the discontent, in order to strengthen their position, procured the creation of a new office, the holder of which was called "*The Captain of the Guard and the Conservator of Peace*."³ He had a bodyguard of 50 horse and 100 foot soldiers assigned to him, and he was paid a salary of 10,000 golden florins a year. He was nominally a chief constable, but he was, in fact, a dictator. He was placed above all law, for he could deprive any citizen of life or property without trial, and he could not be called upon to account to any authority for malfeasance. That such a constitutional change should have been tolerated, even experimentally, by a democracy, is striking, and illustrates what has been said with regard to the Guelphic conception of liberty. The Florentines were typical Guelphs, and as long as they thought they had a voice in the government, they would submit to much tyrannous legislation; and the wire-pulling party leaders would sacrifice almost any principle for the sake of maintaining their faction in power.⁴ The yoke of Jacopo Gabrielli of Gubbio, who was the first Conservator of Peace, proved too heavy to be borne, and at the end of the year 1336, when his term of office expired, the people refused to appoint a successor. Indeed he had made himself so obnoxious that a law was passed that no native of Gubbio should hold office in Florence for ten years.⁵

¹ It was estimated that the injury to public property alone amounted to 250,000 florins.

² Villani, lib. xi. cap. 2 and 3. The sins which were thought to have provoked the Deity were the tyranny, arrogance, and gluttony of the men and the vanity of the women.

³ They had first procured the appointment of some "Captains of the Guard" or "Bargellini," but these proved too independent, and were superseded by a single official.

⁴ It should, however, be added that many of the tyrannous expedients were initiated by one party to hit the *chiefs* of the other, and were felt more by the nobles than the people.

⁵ Villani, lib. ix. cap. 39. The *podestà* of the same year, who was a violent and unprincipled man, was also a native of Gubbio.

Villani gives some interesting details respecting the population and wealth of Florence at this time.¹ He estimates that there were 90,000 natives and 1,500 foreigners residing in the city, besides inmates of religious houses. Of the 90,000, 25,000 were men capable of bearing arms (*i.e.* males between fifteen and seventy years of age), of whom 1,500 were *grandi*. In the *contado* there were 80,000 men capable of bearing arms. There were from 5,500 to 6,000 children annually baptised at San Giovanni, and the excess of males over females was usually from 300 to 500.² From 8,000 to 10,000 children were learning to read, and there were six schools at which from 1,000 to 1,200 were learning arithmetic. Grammar and rhetoric were taught in four schools to some 550 or 600 children. The normal revenue of the State was 300,000 golden florins, while its ordinary expenditure was only 40,000. The churches and religious houses in the city and suburbs numbered one hundred and ten. There were a large number of palaces and fine houses in the city, and more than twice as many within a radius of six miles, and each year new buildings of increased magnificence were being erected.³

The thriving and industrious little city of Lucca⁴ had for many years past been a Naboth's vineyard to the Florentines, and the loss of it through Mastino's perfidy when it was almost within their grasp, caused the desire for its possession to become nothing less than a passion, which for some time to come obscured their judgment.

Although the finances of Florence were at a lower ebb than usual, she determined to make war on the lords of Verona regardless of expense.⁵ But such foes were too powerful to be attacked single-handed with any hope of success, for Mastino and Alberto della Scala were reputed to possess larger resources than any European potentate except the King of France.⁶

¹ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 91-94.

² No register was kept till 1450, but the priest of San Giovanni was in the habit, for his own information, of putting into a box a black bean for each boy and a white bean for each girl whom he baptised.

³ It is not quite clear whether Villani is here speaking of the palaces in 1280 or 1336. But if the statement was true in the former, it was certainly still more so in the latter year. Villani (lib. xi. cap. 92) gives a minute account of the amounts raised by duties at the city gates and (cap. 93) of the salaries of some of the officials.

⁴ The city was proverbially known as "Lucca l'Industriosa."

⁵ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 95.

⁶ They were lords not only of Verona, but Padua, Vicenza, Treviso, Brescia, Feltro, Belluno, Modena, Parma, and Lucca were subject to them.

Fortunately for Florence the Venetians were at this time annoyed with the La Scala brothers for having established salt works at Mestre and so deprived them of a lucrative monopoly.¹ They were, too, alarmed at the growing power of Verona. Under these circumstances Florence had no difficulty in persuading Venice to join her in making war on Verona, and a treaty was concluded between them. One of the Florentine emissaries who negotiated this alliance was a Salvestro de' Medici who was a prominent member of the *popolani grassi*.

According to Litta, it was the Salvestro the son of Alamanno and Margherita de' Neri who was sent on this mission to Venice. But as he died in 1388 he must have been a young man for such an important post in 1336. It is evident that Litta must be wrong in stating that this same Salvestro was prior in 1318, seeing that no one under forty was eligible for that office. If this were so, he was taking an active part in public life after he was 100 and he died at 110. It seems more probable the ambassador sent to Venice in 1336 was Salvestro the son of Averardo, and the great grandfather of Cosimo (Pater Patriæ).

By the terms of the treaty, the expense of the campaign against the house of La Scala within the Trevisan March, was to be borne by the two Republics in equal proportions, and Florence was to be at liberty to act independently against Lucca and Parma. It was also stipulated that neither Republic should make truce or peace with their common foe without the consent of the other. This was the first occasion on which Venice had allied herself with Florence, and the Florentines esteemed it a great honour.²

Fortune favoured the allies, and before the end of 1338 Treviso and the salt lagoons had been wrested from the La Scalas, Alberto was prisoner, and Vicenza was in peril. Mastino, seeing that the struggle was going against him, entered into secret negotiations with Venice, and Venice having obtained what she wanted, made a truce with him behind the back of her ally. Florence, justly indignant at so flagrant a breach of the treaty, sent ambassadors to Venice to demand that the cession of Lucca should be made a condition of peace. They spent many days in Venice, "endeavouring to get the advantage of the

¹ The Venetians had important salt works at Chioggia.

² The Venetians had hitherto held aloof from Italian politics and had never condescended "to ally themselves with any Republic or Despot by reason of their great superiority and state" (Villani, lib. xi. cap. 50).

Venetians, but the perfidious wretches, descended from that Trojan traitor Antenor, adhered to their own intent and could not be moved."¹ Peace was proclaimed on January 24th, 1339, and, though Florence had failed to obtain the object of her desire, she was confirmed by treaty in the possession of no inconsiderable slice of Lucchese territory which she had seized.²

During the progress of the war Florence purchased from the Tarlati for 39,000 florins their signorial rights over Arezzo and the Valdambra for a period of ten years. The Aretines (who had received a nominal loan of 18,000 florins from Florence) regarded the transaction with approval, but it nearly involved Florence in a war with Perugia.³

This gain however was small compared with the losses which Florence sustained. The Veronese war had cost her more than 25,000 florins a month, and she had suffered from causes beyond her own control.⁴ Philip VI. of France had, without warning, indiscriminately charged all Italian merchants and bankers residing in his dominions with usury and extortion, and ordered their arrest. A large number of these were Florentines whose release was only procured by payment of exorbitant ransoms, the exaction of which was no doubt the real cause of their apprehension. And a still heavier loss arose from a banking transaction between Edward III. of England, and the Bardi and Peruzzi. For more than ten years past King Edward had been borrowing from these two firms large sums of money to enable him to carry on war with France, and his debt to them now amounted to 1,365,000 golden florins. This sum, or at any rate the greater part of it, was for some reason which is by no means clear, never repaid. Peruzzi alleges⁵ that the king basely repudiated the debt by a royal edict of May 6th, 1339, but this edict bears the very opposite construction. It is, no doubt, a general revocation of all orders for payment of moneys out of the national exchequer, but payments due to "our beloved merchants of the Companies of Bardi and Peruzzi" are expressly excepted

¹ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 90.

² She thus acquired Fucecchio, Castelfranco, Santa Croce, Santa Maria a Monte, Montetopoli in Valdarno; Montecatini, Montesommano, Montevettolino, Massa, Tozzile, and Uzzano in Valdinievole; Avellano, Burano, Sorana, and Castelvechio in Valdiluna. And the important towns of Buggiano and Pescia and the fortress of Altopascio were afterwards ceded to her (Villani, lib. xi. cap. 90).

³ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 59-61.

⁴ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 88.

⁵ Peruzzi, p. 471.

from its operation.¹ Probably the transaction was an honest one and the Florentine bankers had miscalculated the value of the securities on which their moneys had been advanced.² Although the large landed possessions of the Bardi and Peruzzi saved them for a few years from bankruptcy, a great number of small firms and private individuals who had deposited money with them were ruined, and Florentine credit was shaken all over the civilised world.³

The troubles which Florence had to bear at this time were not only financial. In 1340 plague and famine made their appearance, and though the population was reduced by one-sixth the food supply was insufficient. In order to appease an angry Deity the sentences on the exiles were revoked and the confiscated property of such of them as were dead that was in the hands of the Government was ordered to be paid to their widows and orphans. The latter part of this edict was only partially carried out, to which the continuance of the plague in the winter was attributed.⁴

After these disasters, and perhaps owing to the state of mind that they had produced, a new and more rigorous code of sumptuary laws was passed, with a view to repressing excessive expenditure at weddings, funerals, and other family gatherings, and to regulate portions given to daughters on marriage.⁵

¹ Rymer's *Fœdera*, p. 1081.

² Symonds, i. 235.

³ Just before this catastrophe the Bardi had purchased the fortified towns of Vernia and Margona, as well as other places outside Florentine territory. The Republic, realising the independent power which such possessions afforded to her citizens, thereupon passed a law prohibiting similar purchases in the future. In 1340 the Florentine Government acquired these towns by a forced sale (Napier, ii. 38). The Bardi and Peruzzi failed, as will be mentioned, in 1345 (Villani, lib. xi. cap. 88).

⁴ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 114.

⁵ Ammirato, iii. 10, note 2. Laws for similar objects had been passed in 1306 and 1333, and others were subsequently passed in 1345 (Ammirato, iii. 92), in 1355, 1384, 1388, 1396, 1439, 1456, and 1562 (Biagi's *Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines*, p. 40).

ART AND LITERATURE

1318-1340

ARCHITECTS	SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	AUTHORS
Giotto	Giotto	Giotto	Dante
Taddeo Gaddi	Andrea Pisano	Taddeo Gaddi Simone Martini	Petrarch

GIOTTO's wanderings after he left Florence about the year 1318 cannot be traced with certainty. He returned there in 1327, after visiting and working in many towns.¹ A year or two afterwards we find him at Naples, where he stayed for two or three years, and in 1332 he took up his final abode in Florence. When in Florence in 1327 he painted a portrait of Charles, Duke of Calabria, kneeling before the Virgin, in the Palazzo Vecchio (no longer visible);² and the beautiful Coronation of the Virgin painted for the Baroncelli chapel in the church of Santa Croce, in which are embodied all the innovations which Giotto introduced into his other works, was also probably painted at this time.³ To the same period must be attributed his design for the beautiful gates of the Baptistery that were modelled by Andrea Pisano in 1330.⁴ After Giotto's return to Florence in 1332 he was appointed chief architect of the cathedral and of the walls and fortifications of the city. Consequently the remainder of his life was devoted chiefly to architecture, but he found time to paint a Madonna and Child for the church of Ognissanti, which is now in the *Accademia*.⁵

In 1332 he was directed by the Signory to prepare plans for a campanile adjoining the cathedral, and when his design had

¹ He probably visited (among other towns) Padua, Verona, Ferrara, Ravenna, Faenza, Urbino, Arezzo, Lucca, and Rome, but most of the works that he executed in these places have perished (Vasari, i. 106, 107). It has been generally supposed that he was in Avignon in 1323 or 1324, but this seems a mistake (Crowe and Cav., i. 272). ² Vasari, i. 499.

³ Rio's *Poetry of Christian Art* (1854), p. 54. This work is now in the Medici chapel in the same church. Giotto executed other works in S. Croce, which have perished (Crowe and Cav., i. 309).

⁴ As they are generally known as Andrea Pisano's gates they will be described among his works. It is probable, however, that they were designed by Giotto (Lindsay, i. 374).

⁵ *La Fenestre*, 193. It was painted in 1334. Vasari (vol. i. p. 115) mentions other works that Giotto painted at this time, but these have disappeared.

been approved a decree was passed that the campanile should be built "so as to exceed in magnificence, height and excellence of workmanship everything of the kind that had been achieved by the Greeks and Romans when at the zenith of their greatness."¹ The foundation-stone was laid with much ceremony on July 18th in the same year, and the work made rapid progress. A Veronese, who chanced to be in Florence at the time, and in an ill-advised moment hazarded the remark that the Republic was taxing its strength too far, was straightway thrown into prison.² On his liberation at the end of two months he was walked through the public treasury, in order to teach him that Florence could build a whole city of marble, were she so minded, and not merely one poor tower.³ Critics will differ as to how far Giotto succeeded in fulfilling the extravagant behest of his employers, but it is generally allowed that "the Shepherd's Tower" (as Ruskin picturesquely designates it) is not only one of the loveliest and most satisfactory specimens of Italian Gothic, but is one of the very finest achievements of Mediæval Architecture.⁴ It has also an interest beyond its beauty of form and glow of colour. Around its base are twenty-seven bas-reliefs of admirable workmanship, most of which were designed by Giotto, and some of which were probably executed by his own hand.⁵ The whole series in its peculiar character and spirit is unparalleled in Italy,⁶ and marks the same advance (both in choice and treatment of subject) in sculpture as is to be found in Giotto's paintings. Hitherto Art had been the bond-slave of the Church. The artist of the Byzantine period never ventured to portray any but religious scenes, and his choice of subject was still further restricted by tradition. These panels manifest the

¹ Richa, vi. 62.

² This may have been done by the Conservator of Peace, and, if so, was doubtless less displeasing to the Florentines than most of his arbitrary acts.

³ Lindsay, ii. 58.

⁴ The admiration of some will be diminished by the knowledge that the tower is not built of marble, but only veneered with it. Giotto designed it with a spire 50 braccia (96 feet) high, but this was never erected (Vasari, i. 114).

⁵ Crowe and Cavalcaselle (vol. i. p. 339) question whether Giotto ever sculptured any of them, and so does Prof. Colvin (*Macmillan's Magazine*, vol. xlv. p. 451), but there seems no reason for doubting Ghiberti's statement that he did. Vasari, Lord Lindsay, and Ruskin follow Ghiberti.

⁶ "Read but these inlaid jewels of Giotto's once with patient following; and your hour's study will give you strength for a life" (Ruskin's *Shepherd's Tower*, p. 161).

birth of a new spirit that was, in course of time, to paganise Art and to rationalise Religion.¹ They represent, allegorically, the progress of the human race from the Creation to Giotto's day. The growth of civilisation is traced through nomad life in the compartments on the western face; through domestic life (by the introduction of the Arts and Sciences) in those on the southern face; during a period of enterprise (*e.g.* discovery of foreign lands, colonisation, trade) in those on the eastern face; while the intellectual and moral progress under a Christian dispensation forms the subject of those on the northern face.² "Of these representations of human art under heavenly guidance, the series of bas-reliefs which stud the base of this tower of Giotto's must be held certainly the chief in Europe."³

While the campanile was in course of erection Giotto was no doubt also engaged in superintending the construction of the cathedral, which was still incomplete. It has been stated by several writers⁴ that Arnolfo's unfinished façade was pulled down in 1334 and replaced by one from a design of Giotto's, but Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle have adduced evidence that the new façade was from a plan that emanated from a board of architects twenty years after Giotto's death.⁵

Giotto died on January 8th, 1337,⁶ and he was buried in the cathedral at the corner nearest his campanile.⁷ "Giotto was not indeed one of the most accomplished painters, but he was one of the greatest men who ever lived. He was the first master of his time, in architecture as well as in painting; he was the friend of Dante, and the undisputed interpreter of religious truth, by means of painting, over the whole of Italy. The works of such a man may not be the best to set before children in order

¹ The same spirit had been seen in the works of Niccola and Giovanni Pisano, but its rapid spread was owing to Giotto's influence.

² For a detailed description of each panel see Lindsay, ii. 59-63, and Ruskin's *Shepherd's Tower*. See also "Giotto's Gospel of Labour," by Prof. Colvin in *Macmillan's Magazine* for April, 1877, pp. 448-460.

³ *The Shepherd's Tower*, p. 160.

⁴ Vasari, p. 146; Richa, vi. 51; Perkins, i. 56; Lindsay, i. 371, 2.

⁵ Crowe and Cav., iii. 185, note. This does not exclude the hypothesis that Giotto made a design which was elaborated by the board of architects and hence known as Giotto's. The new façade, by whomsoever designed, was engraved by C. Nelli. A print of Arnolfo's façade may be seen in Richa, vol. vi., facing p. 51.

⁶ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 12. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, apparently oblivious that Villani uses old style, give 1336 as the date of Giotto's death.

⁷ His bust by Benedetto da Majano was placed there by Lorenzo de' Medici in 1490.

to teach them drawing, but they assuredly should be studied with the greatest care by all who are interested in the history of the human mind."¹

Giotto's chief collaborator in the execution of the bas-reliefs on the campanile was ANDREA PISANO (the most famous of Giovanni Pisano's pupils), who took up his abode in Florence early in the fourteenth century.² After the death of Giovanni Pisa produced no eminent sculptor, but the traditions of the Pisan school were carried on, modified by local characteristics, at Florence, Siena, and Naples. The Florentine school, under the influence of Andrea Pisano—or rather under the influence of Giotto transmitted through Andrea Pisano—soon attained pre-eminence.

Andrea's works, as compared with those of Giovanni and Niccola Pisano, exhibit a marked progress both in beauty of design and excellence of execution. But there is a difference between them other than mere improvement. Andrea abandoned the architectural manner of Niccola and his pupils, and initiated the allegorical style.³ This change is distinctly traceable to his friendship for Giotto, whose genius impressed itself upon him in a remarkable degree, and it has been truly said that, fortunately for sculpture, he became thoroughly Giottesque in thought and style.⁴

After leaving Venice he had the reputation of being the most skilful bronze-caster in Italy, and, on the recommendation of Giotto, he was commissioned by the *Calimala* Guild to make two bronze doors for the Baptistery at Florence. He completed the model for these (from Giotto's design) in 1330, but the casting and finishing cost him nine years of labour.⁵ When exposed to view in 1339, the admiration they aroused was great. The Signory, accompanied by foreign ambassadors, visited the Baptistery in state to inspect them, and conferred on Andrea the honour of citizenship—a dignity that was rarely awarded to any foreigner

¹ Ruskin's *Giotto and his Works in Padua*, p. 24.

² This must have been between 1308, when he was carving capitals for the columns of the ducal palace at Venice, and 1330, when he modelled the Baptistery door at Florence.

³ Perkins, i. 63; Lindsay, i. 372. Assuming that Giotto was a sculptor, his panels in the campanile were not executed till after Andrea's door for the Baptistery had been modelled.

⁴ Lindsay, i. 372. This is manifest in his sculpture on the campanile.

⁵ Villani, lib. x. cap. 177. The *Misses Horner* (vol. i. p. 24) say that the casting and gilding was done by Venetians.

who was not of distinguished rank. The doors contain twenty large panels representing in bas-relief events in the life of S. John the Baptist, and eight smaller ones of allegorical figures of virtues. All are expressive, especially the virtues, which are full of poetic feeling.¹ These gates originally stood in the place of honour, facing the cathedral, but they were removed (to make room for Ghiberti's more famous gates) to the southern side, facing the Bigallo. In spite of Michelangelo's encomium, there are not a few who prefer Andrea's to Ghiberti's work, and to whom it appears more in accordance with the true principles of Art.² It is a disputed point whether the design for these gates was by Andrea himself or by Giotto. Vasari and an earlier writer expressly assert that it was by Giotto.

It seems to have been soon after Andrea took up his abode in Florence that he sculptured the statue of Pope Boniface VIII. (probably from Giotto's design, and until recently believed to have filled a niche in Giotto's façade), that is now in the Rucellai gardens.³ Andrea Pisano lived for many years after Giotto, and his subsequent work will be alluded to later.

The frescoes in the Baroncelli chapel at S. Croce, representing incidents in the life of the Virgin Mary, painted by Giotto's godson and pupil, TADDEO GADDI (c. 1300-1366) were probably commenced about the year 1327.⁴ Taddeo was not only a painter but an architect, and after Giotto's death he superintended the completion of the campanile. The church of Or San Michele, the foundation of which was laid in 1329, was built in accordance with his design.

In 1330 the strikingly graceful campanile of the Badia, with its somewhat unusual pyramidal apex, was built as it now stands, but the name of the architect who designed it does not seem to be known.⁵ The bridges which had been destroyed by the flood of 1333 were all rebuilt. The Ponte alle Carraja was commenced in 1334 and finished in 1337;⁶ and plans for the Ponte Vecchio and Ponte Trinità were prepared in 1336 by Taddeo Gaddi.⁷ The cost of the former was 72,000, and of the latter

¹ The moulded reliefs on the joints and lintels were added by Ghiberti in the next century.

² *Macmillan's Magazine* (art. by Prof. Colvin), xxxv. p. 452.

³ Lindsay, i. 372; Perkins, i. 66.

⁴ Crowe and Cav., i. 308, 315. Taddeo was the son of Gaddo Gaddi the mosaicist.

⁵ Richa, i. 195.

⁶ Reumont's *Tavole*, sub ann. 1334.

⁷ Crowe and Cav., i. 367.

26,000 golden florins.¹ The Ponte Vecchio remains as it was then built.²

An altar-piece (of the Annunciation, S. Ansano, and a female saint³), painted for the church of S. Ansano at Siena, in the year 1333, by the great Sienese master, Simone Martini (or Simone Memmi as he is also called), and his relation Lippo Memmi, is now in the Uffizi. The frescoes in the Capella degli Spagnuoli, in S. Maria Novella, which are generally attributed to Simone, were painted rather later, and will be noticed in the next chapter.

LITERATURE

Brilliant as this period (1318-1340) of Florentine history is from its artistic achievements, it is perhaps even more remarkable from its literary importance. The writings which it produced were not numerous, but they were of rare merit, and to one is usually accorded the second place of honour amid the poems of the world. But it is not so much from the nature of these that the importance of this epoch arises, as from the fact that in it the sun of Mediæval Literature set, and the day of *Litteræ Humaniores* dawned. On September 14th, 1321, shortly after the completion of *Il Paradiso*, DANTE died. On April 6th, 1327, the vision of Laura in the church of S. Claire at Avignon awoke in PETRARCH the power of song.⁴ In 1339 his Latin poem *Africa* was given to the world, and before that date much of his correspondence and many of his prose compositions had been written. It may be said therefore, with approximate accuracy, that the years 1321-1327 form the literary boundary between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Posterity has, without doubt, awarded to Petrarch a lower niche in the temple of fame than to Dante, but his influence on literature was considerably greater. Dante founded no school, while the scholars of Petrarch form almost as distinct a group as the Giotteschi. Petrarch indeed did for literature

¹ Vasari, i. 197.

² It was pronounced unsafe about 1870, when its demolition was discussed by the municipality. It is reported that it would have been taken down ere this if funds for the erection of a new structure had been forthcoming. Providentially this has not yet been the case.

³ Said by Mrs. Jameson to be Santa Reparata, by Crowe and Cavalcaselle to be Santa Giuletta, and by Lord Lindsay to be Santa Massima.

⁴ Symonds, iv. 92. Whether Petrarch first saw Laura in a church has been questioned (Garnett's *Italian Literature*, p. 55).

much what Niccola Pisano did for sculpture. Although his fame now rests on his love sonnets, it was the embodiment of a new spirit, which portrayed itself more in his other works, that he mainly influenced his age. He was the apostle of culture, and to him the vocation of literature was a priesthood.¹ In his supreme mastery over rhetorical prose, in his cult of Cicero, in his passion for collecting manuscripts, and for the resuscitation of Greek studies, "Petrarch initiated the four most important momenta of the classical Renaissance." He was also one of the first to appreciate the educational importance of public libraries, and the historical value of coins, inscriptions, and ancient monuments. "By the instinct of genius he foresaw the future for at least three centuries, and comprehended the highest uses whereof scholarship is capable."²

Petrarch's connection with Florence, though hardly as close as that of Dante, was very similar. His father, *Petracco* (as he called himself), who held a subordinate post in the Florentine Government, espoused the cause of the *Bianchi*, and he and Dante were, on January 27th, 1302, exiled by the same decree. Petracco took up his residence at Arezzo, where his son Francesco was born. He refused to return to Florence under the humiliating conditions which would alone have made it possible, and remained a lifelong exile.

Petrarch, unlike Dante,³ does not seem to have had any strong attachment to his father's native city, and he never took up his abode there.⁴ Late in life he refused the rectorship of Florence University, the acceptance of which would have restored to him his rights of citizenship.⁵

¹ Symonds, ii. 70, 77.

² Symonds, ii. 74.

³ For a vivid description of the effect which Florence had on the life and work of Dante, see Symonds, iv. 85-87.

⁴ He resided chiefly at Avignon, Vaucluse, Parma, and Milan.

⁵ *Ency. Brit.*, xviii. 708 (art. by J. A. Symonds),

CHAPTER VII

1340-1348

THE DUKE OF ATHENS'S LORDSHIP OF FLORENCE—REPEATED
CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES—OVERTHROW OF THE NOBLES—
THE GREAT PLAGUE—ART AND LITERATURE

THE virtual government of Florence was still in the hands of a few influential families belonging to the *popolani grassi* (known at the time as *Le Famiglie*¹), who maintained their ascendancy by malpractices of the grossest character. In 1339 it was noticed that none but members of this clique or their adherents were ever elected to important offices, and suspicion was aroused. A Public Inquiry was held, when it was discovered that the elections had been controlled by means of a duplicate set of election bags, in which the names of candidates that ought to have been destroyed had been fraudulently preserved. The cabal were not abashed by the exposure of their corrupt device, nor daunted when it was defeated by the destruction of all duplicate ballot papers, but at once proceeded to strengthen their position by other illegalities.² Notwithstanding the law to the contrary that had been passed in 1336, they procured the reinstallation of Jacopo Gabrielli da Gubbio as Captain of the Guard, and doubled the number of his bodyguard.³ This man was no sooner appointed than he began using his tremendous powers in the same arbitrary and merciless fashion as before. Everyone who was not a creature of the ruling faction was in daily fear of fine, imprisonment, or death. The nobles, who were again the chief sufferers, were, however, still too powerful to submit passively to such outrages, and before long a formidable conspiracy was on foot for the overthrow of the government.

¹ Gino Capponi, i. 237.

² Villani, lib. xi. cap. 106.

³ *Ibid.*, lib. xi. cap. 118.

It originated with the Frescobaldi and Bardi,¹ members of whose families had been among Jacopo Gabrielli's victims, and a promise of outside support had been obtained from the Counts Guidi, the Uberti and Ubaldini of the Apennines, and the Pazzi of the Val d'Arno.² The plot would probably have succeeded had it not been revealed by Andrea de' Bardi (whose wrongs had contributed to give rise to it) to his brother-in-law, Jacopo degli Alberti, who was a member of one of *Le Famiglie*. The government took prompt action, and, calling out all the civic guards, attacked the houses of the nobles in the Oltr' Arno, and a furious fight took place in the Via de' Bardi. The *popolo minuto* aided the government, for although they had suffered much at the hands of Jacopo Gabrielli there was an impression abroad that the nobles aimed at the abolition of popular government. By the courageous intervention of the *podestà*, Maffeo da Ponte Caredi, the nobles were persuaded to lay down their arms, and were allowed to leave Florence. About thirty of the Bardi, Frescobaldi, and Rossi families were declared rebels, their houses were demolished, and their property confiscated.³ Another plot against the government, on a smaller scale, was detected in the following year, in consequence of which Schiatta de' Frescobaldi was executed, and other members of the family, together with some of the Bardi, Pazzi, and Adimari, were punished.⁴ Having repressed these attempted insurrections, the government felt their position more secure, and "their insolence increasing with their power" they continued to persecute the nobles, who were so exasperated that "they would have sold their city or themselves for vengeance, and

¹ Both of these families were eminent among the merchant princes of Florence. The Frescobaldi had been bankers to Edward I. and Edward II. of England, to whom they had advanced large sums on the security of the customs at London, Hull, Newcastle, and Southampton. Between 1293 and 1308 they received about £100,000 from these sources (Peruzzi, p. 175). The Bardi succeeded the Frescobaldi as bankers to the kings of England. They were also the pope's agents in England for the collection of tenths, certainly from 1317 to 1341, and probably longer (Rymer's *Federa, sub anno* 1307, and *Calendar of Papal Registers*, vol. iii. pp. 100, 417, 590, etc.). Their palaces were in the Via de' Bardi.

² There were two families of this name, known respectively as the "Pazzi da Val d'Arno" and the "Pazzi da Ranieri." The former owned many feudal castles in the district, after which they were called. The latter, who came originally from Fiesole, settled in Florence at an early date. They were the progenitors of the famous Pazzi conspirators. (Litta.)

³ Most of them took up their abode at Pisa.

⁴ Villani, lib. xi. cap. 119.

biding their time, when a good opportunity came, they made the most of it."¹

Meanwhile the desire to acquire Lucca had not abated, and in July, 1341, a committee of twenty, all belonging to the *popolani grassi*, was appointed to treat with Mastino della Scala for its purchase. They had extraordinary powers conferred on them; they could make war or peace, or pledge the credit of the Commonwealth, without reference to the government.² They proved themselves to be altogether incompetent, if not corrupt. They concluded a bargain with Mastino for the sale of Lucca to Florence for 250,000 golden florins (a part of which was paid down) at a time when the city was actually beleaguered by a Pisan army.³ Florence attempted to enforce the contract by arms, but her troops were defeated on October 2nd, and in July, 1342, Lucca surrendered to Pisa.

For the past twelve years nothing but failure had attended her attempts to absorb her prosperous little neighbour. Still Florence was not discouraged, and she now applied to the King of Naples and to the Emperor Louis to aid her in a renewed effort. The King declined, but the Emperor expressed his willingness to assist, provided that Florence would receive him as her lord, a conditional offer which the Florentines had the good sense to refuse. She was driven, therefore, to continue her grasping policy single-handed. The first step to be taken was to find a new Captain-General for the forces of the Republic, and in an ill-starred moment the choice of the government fell on Walter de Brienne, better known as the Duke of Athens.⁴ He had made a favourable impression in 1326 when he came to Florence as the Duke of Calabria's Vicar, and he had recently distinguished himself in a subordinate command in the expedition against Pisa. The appointment pleased the people, but something more than the selection of a popular commander was necessary to save the government. As has been seen, its position in the past had often been precarious, and the mismanagement of the "enterprise of Lucca," as Machiavelli calls it, had still further increased its unpopularity. The fruitless expenditure occasioned by the blunders of "the Twenty" had entailed

¹ Machiavelli, p. 98.

² Villani, lib. xi. cap. 119.

³ Machiavelli, p. 98. Pisa had, in 1329, contracted for the purchase of Lucca for 60,000 florins, and though the purchase money was paid she had been tricked out of the fruits of her contract.

⁴ He was of course only titular Duke of Athens.

additional taxes, and the incompetence of those in authority was denounced on all sides. Accordingly the government had recourse to the same infamous expedient for maintaining their ascendancy as had proved effectual on two previous occasions, namely, the appointment of a "Captain of the Guard." To this office, with its almost unlimited powers, they did not scruple to appoint the Duke of Athens, a man of whom they knew hardly anything. Villani calls him a mere adventurer,¹ and says that he was more of a Greek than a Frenchman. He was, it is true, born in Greece, but he was a Frenchman with Asiatic blood in his veins. He is described as small of stature and forbidding in appearance. Though he was brave and sagacious, he was cruel, treacherous, and dissolute, and it is said that his ambition was only exceeded by his avarice.²

He entered Florence in June, 1342, and although the Palazzo Vecchio was offered him as a residence, with an affectation of humility he took up his abode in the convent adjoining the church of S. Croce. He began his exercise of the large powers that had been entrusted to him with ostentatious moderation and impartiality, but there can be little doubt that from the first he entertained the idea of converting the republic of Florence into a despotism. The position of the three factions into which the community of Florence was at this time divided was favourable to such a scheme. The *popolani grassi*, as has been seen, had succeeded in monopolising the government of the city, which in their hands had become a mercantile oligarchy. With increased wealth they had become arrogant, and they were hated alike by the nobles, whom they insulted, and by the *popolo minuto*, whom they oppressed. The Duke was not slow to grasp the situation, and he set about courting the favour of the two classes who were hostile to the ruling faction. To the nobles he promised the repeal of the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*, and to the people a share in the government. His policy filled the *popolani grassi*, who had placed him in power, with dismay, but worse was in store for them. He had not been in office two months before Giovanni de' Medici,³ one of the most powerful of their number, and Guglielmo degli Altoviti, were seized and executed on charges of bribery and peculation. Members of the Rucellai

¹ "Viandante e pellegrino" (Villani, lib. xii. cap. 1).

² Sismondi, iv. 12; Villani, lib. xii. cap. 8.

³ Giovanni was one of the unpopular "Twenty." He was not an ancestor of "Il Magnifico" (see Pedigree, *ante*, p. 114).

and Ricci families were sentenced to death for similar offences, and only escaped on payment of enormous fines.¹ It is probable that these charges were fabricated, but the Duke's conduct was pleasing to the people, and he was saluted as he rode through the streets with cries of "Long live the just ruler" (*Erviva il giusto Signore*), "Long live the man who punishes the great without fear."²

When the term of office of the "Twenty" expired the Duke thought that the time for decisive action had arrived, and formally demanded of the Signory the lordship of Florence in perpetuity. This demand, as no doubt he expected, was unhesitatingly refused, whereupon he summoned the people to meet "in parliament" in the Piazza di S. Croce on the 7th of September. The manner of the summons and the place of assembly were both irregular, but the Signory, not feeling strong enough to prevent the meeting, sent a deputation to wait on the Duke on the eve of the day on which it was to be held.³ At this interview it was agreed that the Duke should hold office for one year beyond his original appointment, and that (to give the proceeding a constitutional appearance) the agreement should be ratified at an assembly of the people, convened, in accordance with precedent, by the Signory in the Piazza della Signoria.

At the appointed hour the Duke rode into the Piazza escorted by 420 cavaliers and many of the nobles, and took his seat on the *Ringhiera*,⁴ amidst the chief members of the Signory. The proceedings were opened by one of the priors, who commenced to read the terms of the compact, but when he had reached the words "for one year" he was interrupted (in accordance with a preconcerted arrangement) by shouts of "For life!" "Let the lordship be for life!" "Let the Duke be our lord!" The nobles thereupon rushed up the steps of the *Ringhiera*, hoisted Walter de Brienne on their shoulders, and

¹ Nevertheless Naddo Rucellai was in a few weeks compelled to return to Florence and treacherously executed.

² The Duke had contrived by promises of pecuniary aid to enlist on his side a few of the *popolani grassi* (among others the Peruzzi, Antellesi, and Acciaiuoli), whose trading operations had brought them to the verge of bankruptcy. The election of the Duke was facilitated by the financial crisis of 1339. (Peruzzi, p. 459.)

³ Machiavelli (pp. 100-101) gives *in extenso* an argumentative (and no doubt purely imaginary) speech that was addressed to the Duke by the deputation.

⁴ The *Ringhiera* was a raised landing or platform outside the Palazzo Vecchio, from which all public announcements were made to the people. It was rebuilt in 1349.

having forced open the doors of the Palazzo Vecchio, placed him in the President's chair in the great council chamber. Great rejoicings followed, and two days afterwards a decree conferring on the Duke the lordship of Florence for life was passed by all the councils.

In a surprisingly short time the eyes of the Florentines were opened to the real character of the man whom they had so impetuously chosen as their prince. He exasperated the nobles by fining one of the Bardi 500 florins for an assault on a citizen, and he disgusted them by his endeavours to ingratiate himself with the "*Ciompi*" (as the lower orders were now beginning to be called),¹ nine of whom he raised to the priorate. The *Ciompi*, as a class, were not to be cajoled by barren honours while they groaned beneath a burden of additional taxation.² Nor did the *popolani grassi* fare any better at his hands, for he repealed the laws regulating the guilds, and every office that was displeasing to him he abolished. Some of his measures were distasteful to every section of the community. He lost no time in making Arezzo, Pistoja, Volterra, and other Florentine dependencies elect him as their lord. He repealed the sumptuary laws, he robbed charitable institutions, and he made prostitution a source of public revenue. Much offence was given to sober-minded citizens by French customs and fashions in dress which were introduced by his retinue, and which the more volatile portion of the community (male and female) seem to have adopted with readiness.³ He commenced converting the Palazzo Vecchio into a fortress, and seized for the purpose all the material that had been collected for the reconstruction of the Ponte Vecchio. But the act which more than any other diminished his popularity was the conclusion of a treaty of peace with Pisa under which Lucca was ceded to Pisa for fifteen years.⁴ With the citizens he held little or no intercourse, and his only real counsellors were Baglione of Perugia, who had been *Podestà*, Cerrettieri de' Visdomini, his Chancellor, and Guglielmo d'Assisi, his "*Bargello*," or rather his official assassin.⁵ These three men

¹ "*Ciampo*" in its primary sense means a woolcarder; in its secondary sense a worthless fellow. It is probably a corruption of *compère*, a name by which the soldiers of the Duke of Athens used familiarly to address members of the lowest class in Florence (Ammirato, iv. 105).

² He extracted 400,000 florins from the revenue in ten months.

³ Machiavelli, p. 102.

⁴ The treaty was also very prejudicial to Florentine commerce.

⁵ Villani, lib. xii. cap. 8.

constituted the executive government, for though the Signory had not been abolished, it was treated with contumely and practically effaced.

Within little more than a month after his election the citizens found themselves living under a despotism, which soon became a reign of terror. In that short period the Duke had become hateful to well-nigh every citizen. His judges were corrupt and their sentences ferocious. One man who had ventured to speak against the government had his tongue cut from its roots, and another, who, hoping to obtain favour, revealed a plot, had his flesh torn from his bones as he was dragged on a car through the streets. He was rendered still more odious by the conduct of his licentious retinue, whom he suffered to outrage the wives and daughters of the citizens with impunity. Small wonder that before a year had elapsed several plots for his overthrow or assassination were on foot. One of the chief of these was headed by Angelo Acciaiuoli, the Bishop of Florence (who had been one of the Duke's earliest supporters), and who with the Bardi, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Altoviti, Strozzi, and other powerful houses, had enlisted aid from Pisa, Siena, and Perugia. Another was directed by the Donati, Pazzi, Cavicciuli, Cerchi, and Albizzi; and a third by the Adimari, Medici, Bordonì, Rucellai, and Aldobrandini.

These three conspiracies were working simultaneously, and the parties to one did not know of the existence of the others. Each aimed at the assassination of the Duke by its own plan, but each was foiled by the Duke's caution. At length, by an accident, the plot that the Adimari and their friends were hatching was revealed to him by Francesco Brunelleschi, and he at once arrested Antonio Adimari and threw him into prison; but he feared to put him to death, as the conspirators were very numerous, until his foreign troops were reinforced. He therefore at once solicited aid from the lords of Verona, Bologna, and Ferrara, and on the arrival of the news that a Bolognese force had crossed the Apennines, under pretence that he wanted to consult the most influential nobles and citizens as to the punishment to be inflicted on Adimari, he invited 300 of them to meet him in the Palazzo Vecchio, intending when they had all arrived to have them butchered by his soldiery. Fortunately the largeness of the number included in the invitation aroused suspicions, and no one obeyed the summons. When the Duke's intention to massacre the most noteworthy Florentines became known all classes united for the overthrow of the tyrant. During the night of July 25th messen-

gers were sent to Prato and Siena praying for aid, but before it arrived the whole city was in arms. On the 26th the Duke's Burgundian bodyguard, who were on duty in the Piazza della Signoria, were assailed with showers of stones and other missiles from the tops of the houses and were easily dispersed. A small crowd of butchers and woolcarders, led by some of the Cavalcanti, Peruzzi, Acciaiuoli, and Antellesi, made a slight stand. Gianozzo Cavalcanti, mounted on a bench in front of the palace, tried to raise a cheer in the Duke's favour, and to frighten the armed citizens who were streaming into the Piazza by telling them that they were going to certain death. But all such efforts were fruitless, and by the evening the city was completely in the hands of the people, who proceeded to lay siege to the Palazzo Vecchio,¹ where the Duke had taken refuge. Arrigo Fei, an intimate friend of the Duke, was taken in the disguise of a monk and murdered, and his body was dragged naked through the streets; and Simone da Norcia and Filippo Terzuole, two other of the Duke's creatures, were torn in pieces. On the following morning (Sunday, July 27th) aid to the oppressed citizens came pouring in. Siena sent 300 men-at-arms and 400 cross-bowmen; San Miniato 2,000 and Prato 500; while Count Simone da Battifolle, a relative of Count Guida, who had ruled Florence so wisely as King Robert's Vicar, brought in 400 of his retainers.

On Monday, July 28th, a parliament convened by the Bishop of Florence was held in the cathedral, and a provisional government (*Balia*), consisting of seven nobles and seven *popolani*, which was to hold office till October, was appointed,² and negotiations were at once opened. In the palace with the Duke were his two counsellors, who were especially detested by the people, Cerrettieri de' Visdomini and Guglielmo d'Assisi, "men broken in to wickedness of every description after his own fashion," Guglielmo's son—a youth of great beauty, who, although only eighteen years old, is said to have been a greater monster of cruelty than

¹ Villani and Ammirato both say that the Duke took refuge in the *palagio*, which usually means the building now called the *Palazzo Vecchio*. I have, however, seen it stated that it was in the *Bargello* that the Duke and his party were besieged.

² Villani, lib. xii. cap. 17. But Ammirato (vol. iii. p. 60) says that the *Balia* comprised eight *grandi*, viz. Rudolfo de' Bardi, Pino de' Rossi, Gianozzo Cavalcanti, Simone Peruzzi, Giovanni Gianfigliuzzi, Testa Tornaquinci, Bindo della Tosa, Talana degli Adimari; and six *popolani*, viz. Sandro Biliotti, Filippo Magalotti, Bindo Altoviti, Marco Strozzi, Francesco de' Medici, and Bartolo dei Ricci.

his father—some of the priors, and such of the Duke's bodyguard as had escaped from the crowd in the Piazza. In all there were about 400 persons in the building, and with the exception of some biscuits and wine they had no food. For three days after their appointment the *Balla* were endeavouring to arrange terms between the Duke and the people; but the latter would consent to nothing unless Cerrettieri, Guglielmo, and his son were given up to them. The Duke at first peremptorily refused to accede to any such condition, but his starving soldiery compelled him to do so. No sooner were Guglielmo and his son thrust out of the doors of the Palazzo than they were literally hacked into small pieces by the enraged multitude, whose savage fury was not allayed until they had actually eaten their victims' flesh.¹ Cerrettieri de' Visdomini, who happened to be the last to be ejected, managed, while the crowd were wreaking their vengeance on his two companions, to effect his escape. The rage of the people was now so far appeased that they consented to allow the Duke to leave Florence on his undertaking to renounce all claim to its lordship. Accordingly, at the dead of night on August 6th, he was escorted by Count Simone da Battifolle and a body of Sienese troops through the gate of S. Nicholas to Poppi, in the Casentino. He there endeavoured to evade signing his abdication, and was only constrained to do so by the firmness of Count Simone, who made him understand that if he did not he would be taken back to Florence.²

Florence was now free from the worst tyranny that she had ever endured. The Duke's arms were obliterated from the walls of the Bargello, and a marble tablet recording the fact was substituted for them, and it was ordered that S. Anne's Day, on which the rising that ended in his expulsion took place, should evermore be observed as a *festa*.

The revolution was not confined to the walls of Florence, for while it was in progress there Arezzo, Pistoja, Volterra, Colle, and San Gimignano revolted, and not content with throwing off the yoke of the Duke of Athens, they declared themselves independent of Florentine rule.

One of the first acts of the XIV. after the Duke's departure was to repeal every statute that had been passed during his rule,

¹ Some ate the flesh raw and others cooked it ! (Villani, lib. xii. cap. 17.)

² He did not go empty-handed, for he had invested 200,000 florins, of which he had plundered Florence, in French and Neapolitan securities (Napier ii. 72).

except one for allaying family feuds, after which they proceeded to remodel the constitution.¹ They abolished the ancient division of the city into six wards (*sestieri*) returning two priors each, and divided it into four wards (*quartieri*) returning three priors each.² The new wards were called after the principal churches within their respective boundaries, viz. Santa Maria Novella, Santa Croce, San Giovanni, and Santo Spirito. The twelve *Buonomini* were replaced by a council of Eight. Of the three priors elected by each ward, two were required to be taken from the *popolani* and one from the *grandi*, while the members of the VIII. and of all other councils were to be drawn from the two classes in equal proportions.

These reforms had been conceived in a spirit of conciliation, but they gave universal dissatisfaction, and the new government did not last two months. The nobles were discontented, because the share of representation allotted to them was less than what had been promised before the revolt;³ the *popolani grassi*, because they had only a voice in an administration that they had formerly monopolised; and the *popolo minuto*, because they rightly regarded the *popolani grassi* as nobles in everything but name. But the power of the nobles was greater than at first sight appears, for though they only numbered one-third of the priors (in whom the real government of the State was centred) no measure could be passed by that body except by a majority of two to one, and so they could veto every proposal that was not unanimously supported by the *popolani grassi* and the *popolani minuto*, between whom, as has been shown, much jealousy existed. So far, however, was this from satisfying them that they displayed the same lawless spirit as had occasioned the passing of the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia*. Their turbulence soon obliterated every trace of the popular gratitude evoked by the part they had played in the expulsion of the Duke of Athens, and the cry arose that instead of one ruler a thousand had sprung up.⁴ The Bardi, Rossi, and Frescobaldi, who were at this time the leaders of the aristocratic party, resolved on attempting to overthrow the government by

¹ Besides the statute for allaying feuds the only benefit conferred on Florence during the Duke's régime was the widening of the Via Calzaioli.

² This change was supposed to be a concession to the wealthy classes who inhabited the *sestieri* of S. Piero Scheraggio and Oltr' Arno, and who complained that they paid more than half the taxes and elected only a third of the priors. The change, however, was really advantageous to the people.

³ Napier, ii. 85, note.

⁴ Napier, ii. 88.

a *coup de main*, but before their design could be accomplished an armed mob marched, on September 22nd, to the Palazzo Vecchio, forcibly ejected the four noble priors, and compelled them to resign.

Further changes were then made in the constitution. The Council of Eight, which was composed equally of nobles and people, was abolished, and replaced by a council of Twelve, drawn exclusively from the *popolani*; the gonfaloniers of companies (four for each ward) were re-established; and a *Consiglio del Popolo*, consisting of 300 members, 75 of whom were elected by each ward, was created. This distribution of power, as was only to be expected, did but increase the class hatreds that already existed, and the Constitution of September, 1343, had no longer life than that of its predecessor. There was a scarcity of food, and discontent first manifested itself among the lower orders. A mob, led by Messer Andrea Strozzi, a crack-brained knight, marched into the Piazza della Signoria, shouting "Hurrah for the *popolo minuto*! Down with the taxes! Death to the *popolo grasso*!"

The riot was easily suppressed, but it manifested the feeling of the artisan class towards the authorities. It was, however, the attitude of the nobles that was occasioning the government alarm. They were fortifying their palaces, and it was evident that they were not going to acquiesce in their disfranchisement without a trial of strength. Once more the *popolani* determined not to wait to be attacked, and on September 24th, the eve of the day on which it was rumoured that the nobles would rise, the city companies from the San Giovanni and San Lorenzo districts, with the butchers and other artisans numbering together some thousand armed men, under the leadership of the chiefs of the *popolani grassi*,¹ without orders from the Signory, attacked the palaces of the Adimari-Cavicciuli, and after three hours' fighting, forced them to capitulate.² The houses of the Donati, Pazzi, and Cavalcanti were next taken.³ The people then assailed the palaces of the Rossi, Bardi, Manelli, and Nerli, which extended in an almost unbroken line along the south bank of the Arno

¹ Some of the Medici were there.

² The palaces of the Adimari were in the street that is now known as the Via Calziaoli.

³ The palaces of the Pazzi and Donati were in the San Piero Scheraggio quarter; those of the Cavalcanti were in the Mercato Nuovo.

from the Ponte alle Grazie to the Ponte Carraja,¹ and those of the Frescobaldi and Rossi, which stood in the street now known as the Via Maggio,² and in the Piazza de' Frescobaldi. The attacking party, although reinforced with companies from other *quartieri*, was repulsed with great slaughter. But the assault was renewed, and the houses of the Frescobaldi and Rossi were captured. The Bardi alone held out, and though they defended themselves with great stubbornness, they were finally compelled to yield. Not less than twenty-two of their houses were burned to the ground, and the damage to the family property was estimated at 60,000 florins.

This was the most complete victory that the people had ever obtained over the aristocracy during a struggle that had lasted more than 150 years. This struggle, which had passed through different phases and been waged under different names, had virtually become one between capital and labour.³ As soon as order had been restored a new "reformation" of the constitution was of course demanded by the victors, and the work was, as usual, entrusted to a *Balìa*, who called to their aid the Sienese and Perugian ambassadors and the faithful friend of the Republic, Count Simone da Battifolle. Although the nobles were politically extinct, there were still three classes whose demands had to be satisfied, for the *popolo minuto*, as they increased in numbers and importance, had split up into two parties, called respectively the *Mediani*⁴ and the *Artefici Minuti*. The distribution of power allotted by the *Balìa* to these classes in the new constitution was as follows. Of the priors (the number of whom was reduced to eight) two were taken from the *popolani grassi*, three from the *Mediani*, and three from the *Artefici Minuti*. The gonfalonier was taken from each class in turn.⁵

¹ The entrance of the *popolani* into the Oltr' Arno was contested by the Nerli on the Ponte Carraja, by the Frescobaldi and Manelli on the Ponte Trinità, and by the Rossi and Bardi on the Ponte Rubaconte (alle Grazie).

² Formerly the Via Maggiore, and so called from the number of large houses in it (Peruzzi, p. 97).

³ There were of course some long-headed capitalists (such as the Medici) who had, possibly from interested motives, espoused the popular side.

⁴ The *Mediani* comprised seven of the *Arti Minori* that had been recently promoted to the *Arti Maggiori*.

⁵ Villani, lib. xii. cap. 22; Ammirato, iii. 78. The *Balìa* sent in a list of 3,346 names of persons qualified for office, but the gonfaloniers of companies struck out nine-tenths of these. What the class representation was at first among the *Buonomini* and on other minor boards is not clear, but ultimately it was shared in equal proportions between the Greater and Lesser Guilds.

This government, which was elected on October 20th, and came into office on November 1st, 1343, was the most democratic that Florence had hitherto possessed, and it was rendered still more so by the action of the *Arti Minuti*, who, following the evil example of *Le Famiglie*, manipulated the *squittino* in their own interests. "We are now," says Villani, "under the rule of the artisans and *popolo minuto*. Please God that it may exalt and benefit our republic, but I fear that it will be otherwise, on account of our sins and imperfections, and because our citizens are devoid of love and charity and full of deceit and treachery towards one another, and because our rulers continue the cursed practice of promising one thing and doing another."¹ And Machiavelli, writing in the light of after events, asserts that in consequence of the complete subjection of the nobles, Florence lost at this time not only aptitude for arms, but magnanimity.²

Between July and September Florence had been the scene of three revolutions, and in the short space of four months she had tried four different forms of government. Truly the oft-quoted lines of Dante,³ in which he compares his native city to a sick woman vainly striving to obtain relief from pain by change of posture, were even more prophetic of her future than descriptive of her past.⁴ And yet the causes of the ills from which she suffered are not wholly reprehensible nor, as far as posterity is concerned, are they wholly to be regretted. It was not only due to class hatred and personal ambition, to lawlessness and mistrust, that Florence became the home of political experimentalism, but also to her wondrous spirit, which was "at once keenly critical and artistically creative"⁵—a spirit which was ever judging its own creations and ever ready with an expedient for remedying their defects, and which in consequence was incessantly transforming her political organisation. But if it was this spirit which made, or at least contributed to make, her whole history one intermittent fever of insurrection,

¹ Villani, lib. xii. cap. 23.

² Machiavelli, p. 111.

³ "Vedrai te simigliante a quella inferma,
Che non può trovar posa in su le piume,
Ma con dar volta suo dolore scherma."

Purg., vi. 149-151.

⁴ Scartazzini mentions some twenty political changes in Florence between 1248 and 1307, and to his list more might be added (Vernon's Readings on the *Purgatorio* (1889), i. 146-147).

⁵ Burckhardt, p. 73.

it was the same spirit which, working in another sphere, gave us the Shepherd's Tower and the Baptistery Gates, the Or San Michele Tabernacle, and the frescoes in S. Marco.

The new government, following the precedents that had been set by all its predecessors, commenced at once to persecute the subjugated faction, though perhaps with slightly less rancour. It re-enacted the *Ordinamenti della Giustizia* but with some modification.¹ The more remote kinsmen of a noble convicted of an offence against the people were absolved from liability to contribute to the fine imposed on him,² and some 500 *grandi* were permitted, by renouncing their nobility, to obtain partial enfranchisement. The indulgence was however accorded very capriciously, and was "through envy" not extended to some families whose members had fought and died in the popular cause.³ In December seventeen members of the Bardi, Rossi, Frescobaldi, Donati, Pazzi, and Cavicciuli families were declared exiles although they had voluntarily left Florence for their country residences. In the following year (1344) many who had taken up their abode in Milan, Verona, Ferrara, and other states under the rule of a Ghibelline lord were ordered to return under pain of being proclaimed rebels.⁴ And in 1345 every grant (however ancient) made to a noble as reward for public services was revoked,⁵ and the moneys thus realised were appropriated for completing the rebuilding of the Ponte Vecchio and Ponte Trinità. Possibly the government were driven to shifts of this kind by what Villani correctly describes as the greatest financial disaster that had ever befallen Florence.⁶ In January of this year, the Bardi and Peruzzi firms, unable to struggle any longer against the losses arising from their loan to Edward III. of England, suspended payment.⁷ Houses great and small were

¹ Villani (lib. xii. cap. 23) says that the *Ordinamenti* had been repealed by the Duke of Athens, but Tabarrini questions this (*La Vita Italiana nel Trecento*, p. 124).

² Only kinsmen "within the third degree in a direct line" were now liable.

³ Villani, lib. xii. cap. 23. No noble was eligible for a seat on the Signory until five years after the date of his enfranchisement.

⁴ Napier ii, 124.

⁵ The Pazzi were forced to refund property that they had enjoyed for thirty-four years.

⁶ Villani, lib. xii. cap. 55.

⁷ Besides 900,000 florins due to the Bardi and 600,000 to the Peruzzi by the King of England, the King of Sicily owed 100,000 florins to each firm (Villani, lib. xii. cap. 55). S. L. Peruzzi (pp. 52 and 451) goes the length of saying that the ultimate downfall of the Republic commenced with, and was mainly occasioned by, this catastrophe. Edward III. seems to have made trifling recompenses to the Bardi, for we find canonries in Lincoln Cathedral

involved in their failure, notably the Acciaiuoli, Bonaccorsi, Antellesi, Corsini, and da Uzzano. So numerous were the creditors of the insolvent firms that meetings for the arrangement of a composition were obliged to be held in churches, as no other buildings would accommodate them.¹ The creditors of the Bardi were forced to content themselves with nine *soldi* in the *lira* and those of the Peruzzi with four *soldi*.² Poor Giovanni Villani, the historian, who was a member of the Bonaccorsi firm, lost everything he possessed and was thrown into prison for debt.

Still further losses fell upon the Republic in the same year through an ill-advised measure of the government. A reward of 10,000 florins was offered for the head of the Duke of Athens, and a special embassy was sent to the King of France to bring to his knowledge the Duke's enormities. But the King, who was friendly to the Duke, refused to receive the ambassadors, and issued an edict which occasioned the flight of every Florentine merchant from France.³

Through these unfortunate occurrences the government of Florence found itself, in 1345, embarrassed for want of money, and quite unable to liquidate the public debts which the Duke of Athens's rapacity had raised by the large sum of 670,000 florins. To meet this difficulty a plan was devised which has been described as the first stage of a nation's civilisation, and which has been universally followed in modern times. All loans that had been made to the government at various times and on different conditions were funded into one, bearing interest at the rate of five per cent. secured on the revenue, and marketable at a price that fluctuated with the credit of the State. This consolidated stock, which was called *Monte* (a heap), was the first National Debt (as that term is now used) ever called into existence.

The action of the government in other matters is also deserving of mention. Ecclesiastics were deprived of the right to plead "benefit of the clergy" when charged with offences against laymen, and were thus rendered amenable to the civil tribunals; and the chief inquisitor was forbidden to impose

provided for two members of that family in 1343 and a third member was Dean of Glasgow in the same year (*Calendar of Papal Registers*, iii. 57, 60, 125).

¹ Peruzzi, p. 463.

² Peruzzi, p. 462.

³ Villani, lib. xii. cap. 57.

finer or meddle with secular affairs.¹ And besides curbing the power of the priesthood this energetic little democracy initiated other useful reforms. They amended the sumptuary laws,² they facilitated the transfer of real property by a system of registration, and, to prevent the miscarriage of justice in the criminal courts, they established a new magistracy called the "Fourteen Defenders of Liberty."³

These reforms were distasteful to the upper classes (who looked askance at every act of so democratic a government), and gave rise to an incipient interference with the affairs of the State by the *Parte Guelfa* (the management of which was mainly in the hands of the rich)—an interference which, as years went on, grew into a supreme control, and ended in an intolerable tyranny. In 1347 the Captains of "the Party" procured the passing of an Act which disqualified from office any Ghibelline, or the son of any Ghibelline, who, between 1300 and the date of the enactment, had been declared a rebel, or who had lived in a rebellious town, or who had joined in open war against the commonwealth.⁴ This measure, which had all the appearance of being merely intended to harass the Ghibellines (and was in consequence highly popular), was really an insidious attack on the democratic element in the government, as none of the *grandi* suspected of Ghibellinism were in office. It proved a successful move, as several members of the *popolo minuto* were expelled from office, and others, fearing an inquiry into their antecedents, resigned, and their places were immediately filled by Guelphs of higher social standing. When the real object of the law became patent, the Signory endeavoured to mitigate it; but the *Parte Guelfa* were too strong for them, and their attempt only led to the passing of more severe measures of a similar character. The inability of the government to resist these encroachments was probably in part due to an unpopularity that they had undeservedly incurred by reason of the prudence of their foreign policy. One of their first acts had been the conclusion of peace with Pisa, for which they were severely blamed, as the realisation of the long-cherished hope on the part of Florence to acquire Lucca was thereby indefinitely postponed.

¹ The last decree was occasioned by the nefarious conduct of Piero dell' Aquila, who was then head of the Inquisition in Florence and who had been in the habit of fabricating charges of heresy against wealthy citizens for the purpose of enriching himself.

² Ammirato, iii. 92, note 2.

³ Napier, ii. 133.

⁴ Ammirato, iii. 101.

It was well indeed for Florence that she did not then embark on a costly war, for famine and pestilence were at her doors. The harvest of 1346 was a complete failure, and the price of wheat in 1347 was double what it had been in the previous year. Meat rose from $1\frac{1}{2}$ *soldi* to 11 *soldi* per lb., and there was a rise in price, during the same period, of almost all other articles of food. The terrible distress that ensued was somewhat alleviated by the energy of the government, who purchased 26,000 *moggia*¹ of wheat and 1,700 *moggia* of barley. Men and women were employed night and day in baking bread in ten large ovens that had been erected for the purpose, and loaves were sold at four *danari* each. It has been estimated that the entire loss to the State on this transaction was more than 30,000 florins. Crowds flocked into Florence to participate in this charity, and although there were 94,000 persons requiring relief no one was refused throughout the year. A good harvest in 1347 diminished the distress, but the full benefit of this was retarded by a ring among the bakers. Bread riots arose, which the government quelled by hanging the baker who had originated the "corner," and by the end of September the famine was well-nigh over.²

In the following year Florence suffered from another scourge. The great plague which overran the West of Europe from 1348 to 1350 was brought from the Levant to Pisa and Genoa in the former year, and thence rapidly spread all over Italy. As all students of Italian literature are aware, it was this plague which Boccaccio immortalised by using it as a background in his *Decamerone*. In the Introduction to that work will be found a vivid but harrowing picture of its progress in Florence, where it was unusually deadly, for the Florentines had been weakened and emaciated by the famine of the previous year. It raged from April to September, at the end of which time it had carried off three-fifths of the population. Among its many victims was the great Florentine historian Giovanni Villani. The whole community was panic-stricken, and selfishness and inhumanity became as infectious as the disease itself. Children deserted their dying parents, husbands their wives, and fathers and mothers their children.³ Houses abandoned, or tenanted

¹ A *moggio* was a measure containing about 860 pounds weight of grain. A *moggio* of corn made 2,592 loaves of 6 oz. each.

² Villani, lib. xii. cap. 73.

³ Introduction to the *Decameron*.

only by corpses, notwithstanding the risk, were plundered by those who had feared to enter them to succour relations or friends. The conduct of the brethren of the *Misericordia* is the one bright spot in this dismal picture of which there is any record, and but for their heroic exertions the numbers who fell dead in the streets would have remained unburied.

The after-effects of the plague were somewhat surprising. "It was thought by the grave citizens who escaped the pestilence . . . that those who survived would become better, more humble, more virtuous, and better Catholics, keeping themselves from iniquity and sin, and abounding in mutual love and charity. But no sooner did the malady cease than the contrary was seen to be the case. And men . . . forgetting the past, as if it had never been, gave themselves up to dissoluteness and depravity, more than they had ever done before." The city became the scene of all kinds of licentious revels, and men and women paraded the streets decked out in gay garments which had been stolen from the houses of the dead. The few labourers who were willing to return to work demanded exorbitant remuneration. And the effects of the plague on politics were also baneful. The diminution of the population had been such that it was found impossible to fill the public offices from the existing registers, and new ones had to be prepared, which, from necessity, reduced the popular element in the government and thereby increased the malignant power of the Captains of the *Parte Guelfa*.

One legacy was, however, left by the plague for which posterity should be grateful. Many a pest-stricken citizen, after seeing the whole of his family die, bequeathed his all to some charitable institution.¹ The sums thus left to the Company of Or San Michele, for distribution among the poor in honour of the picture of the Madonna in the church of Or San Michele, amounted (with what had been previously given for the same purpose) to 350,000 florins. For this large sum the Company had hardly any use, as the poor had been almost exterminated by disease, so they determined to expend a portion of it in doing honour to their Madonna in another way, and the order was given to Orcagna for a sculptured tabernacle in which her picture was

¹ The Hospital of S. Maria Nuova and the *Misericordia* thus received about 25,000 florins each.

to be enshrined. Thus it was that Florence became possessed of one of the finest works of its kind to be found in Italy.¹

ART AND LITERATURE

1340-1348

ARCHITECTS	SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	AUTHORS
Taddeo Gaddi	Andrea Pisano	Taddeo Gaddi	Petrarch
	Nino Pisano	Stefano	Boccaccio
		Giottino	G. Villani
		Simone Martini	

PAINTING

Giotto, as we have seen, died in 1337, and so in noticing the paintings of the period under review, we are brought at once into contact with the earliest of the Giotteschi—an enthusiastic and industrious band—who, while not inheriting their master's genius, had sufficient talent to express, though often inadequately, his ideas; and to continue and occasionally improve upon his methods. Their works, when not steps in a ladder, are at least links in a chain which connects (through Masaccio) the art of Giotto with that of the great masters of the *cinquecento*. Giotto's influence spread all over Italy—to Rome (through Cavallini), to Naples (through Messer Simone), while others of his proselytes or pupils founded important schools in Lombardy, Umbria, and Tuscany. It is only with the last of these that we need concern ourselves. Of the early Tuscan Giotteschi, Taddeo Gaddi, Stefano, and Giottino (or Maso) were the chief. Almost all of Stefano's works have perished.

The works of TADDEO GADDI executed before 1340 have been already noticed. Of those on which he was subsequently engaged—or at least of such of them as now exist—the most important are in the Capella degli Spagnuoli at S. Maria Novella. The frescoes which adorn the walls of this chapel (only some of which are by Taddeo) are among the most interesting paintings of this period.² They were probably executed between 1339 and

¹ Other cities of Italy suffered even more severely than Florence from the plague of 1348. Pisa lost four-fifths (or as some say seven-tenths) of her population. Siena buried 80,000 of her citizens, and never recovered from the blow (Napier, ii. 157.)

² The frescoes by Giottino in S. Croce are, as far as the history of Art is concerned, probably of higher interest. For two highly appreciative and sug-

1346. They represent the Procession to Calvary, the Crucifixion, and the Descent into Hades (on the eastern wall); the Apotheosis of S. Thomas Aquinas (on the northern wall); and the Church Militant and Triumphant (on the southern wall). "Fra Jacopo Passavanti¹ is said to have selected the subjects. They are chosen with a depth of thought, a propriety of taste, to which those of the Camera della Segnatura, painted by Raphael in the Vatican, afford the only parallel. Each composition is perfect in itself, yet each derives significance from juxtaposition with its neighbour, and one idea pervades the whole, the Unity of the Body of Christ, the Church, and the glory of the order of S. Dominic as defenders and preservers of that Unity. This chapel, therefore, is to the Dominicans what the church of Assisi is to the Franciscans, the graphic mirror of their spirit, the apotheosis of their fame."² The authorship of the frescoes that adorn its walls has been a matter of controversy. According to Vasari, Taddeo Gaddi had been commissioned to decorate the chapel, and he had completed the ceiling, and was at work on the northern wall, when the frescoes by Simone Martini³ in the church of S. Spirito were uncovered, and they were so greatly admired that the prior of S. Maria Novella proposed to Taddeo that Simone should assist him in the completion of the work on which he was engaged. To this Taddeo, who was warmly attached to Simone, readily assented, and contenting himself with finishing the northern wall, allowed Simone to decorate the remainder.⁴ This statement has been accepted without question for centuries, but now recent writers⁵ contend that some parts of the work, hitherto attributed to Simone Martini, were by Antonio

gestive descriptions of the frescoes in the Capella degli Spagnuoli, see Ruskin's *Mornings in Florence*, pts. iv. and v. (*The Vaulted Book* and *The Strait Gate*), and Lindsay, ii. 145-155. The latter is perhaps the more useful on the spot. Mr. Berenson (*Florentine Painters*, pp. 21-22), subjecting these frescoes to his two pseudo-scientific tests of "tactile values" and "material significance," finds in them nothing but emptiness and confusion.

¹ He was grandson of Giovanni Tornaquinci who fell defending the *carroccio* at the battle of Montaperti (Horner, i. 474).

² Lindsay, ii. 146.

³ He is more often, but erroneously, called Simone Memmi, or Simone di Memmo (Crowe and Cav., ii. 60.)

⁴ Vasari, i. 201. Lord Lindsay (vol. ii. p. 152) thinks that the lower part of the northern wall (the Profane and Theological Sciences which are conspicuously graceful) are, if not by Simone, at least by a Sienese artist.

⁵ Rumohr, Crowe and Cav. (vol. i. pp. 374, 488), and Lafenestre.

Veneziano, and other parts possibly by Andrea da Firenze.¹ Lord Lindsay, after summing up the evidence for and against the ascription of these works to Martini (and little new has been adduced since he wrote) holds that Vasari's story has not been disproved.²

Concerning the personality of "GIOTTINO," as the greatest of the early Florentine Giotteschi was called, but little is certainly known. It is probable that the similarity of his style to that of Giotto earned for him his pseudonym. Vasari alleges that his name was Tommaso, that he was the son of the Florentine painter Stefano, and that he was born in 1324 and died in 1357. It may be that Vasari has confused him with a Giotto di Stefano, who was living in 1368,³ but however this may be, it is generally agreed that the "Giotto" of Vasari and the "Maso" of Ghiberti are the same person.⁴ His most important works are in the Capella de' Bardi (or S. Silvestro as it is sometimes called) in the church of S. Croce. They consist of the tomb of Obertino de' Bardi and a series of frescoes representing the history of Constantine and the miracles of S. Silvester. Of these frescoes it has been said they are the only works of the fourteenth century that give us some slight idea of the manner afterwards adopted by Masaccio.⁵ None of Giotto's other pupils so thoroughly preserved the qualities of their great master and yet at the same time displayed symptoms of progress.⁶ There is a fresco in the *Accademia Filarmonica*, representing the expulsion of the Duke of Athens from Florence, which must have been painted after 1343; and there is another of *La Misericordia*, in the Bigallo, which was painted in 1342. A beautiful Pietà in the Uffizi may perhaps be by him.⁷

¹ I doubt if many visitors to the Capella degli Spagnuoli will endorse Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle's opinion (vol. i. p. 375) that the frescoes on its walls are "second-class works."

² Lindsay, ii. 158. Four of the Emperor's attendants in the Church Militant are supposed to be portraits of Cimabue, Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi, and Simone Martini.

³ Crowe and Cav., i. 416; Perkins, ii. 216.

⁴ Vasari, i. 219; Lindsay, ii. 77.

⁵ Rio's *Poetry of Christian Art* (1854), p. 62.

⁶ Crowe and Cav., i. 421.

⁷ La Fenestre, p. 6. Giotto also did some good work in the Lower Church at Assisi.

SCULPTURE

ANDREA PISANO continued to work in Florence until his death, which is variously assigned to 1345, 1349, and after 1359.¹ After the completion of his greatest work—the casting of the Baptistery doors—in 1339, much of his time must have been devoted to carving the bas-reliefs round the campanile from Giotto's designs. In 1345 he was employed by the Duke of Athens to alter and fortify the Palazzo Vecchio. It was probably after this date that he sculptured the statues of the four doctors of the Latin Church, which are said to have been executed for, and at one time to have adorned, the façade of the cathedral, and are now to be seen at the foot of the avenue leading to Poggio Imperiale (outside the Porta Romana), where they figure as Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Petrarch.² It is difficult, however, to reconcile the tradition regarding the origin of these statues with the results of recent research, from which it appears that the façade was not begun till 1357.³

Andrea was assisted in modelling the Baptistery gate by his son Nino, who subsequently worked at Pisa.⁴

ARCHITECTURE

Not many buildings of importance were erected during this period, but the Ponte Vecchio, which had been commenced from a design of Taddeo Gaddi's in 1336, was completed under his supervision on July 18th, 1345, and the Ponte S. Trinità, also designed in 1336, was completed in 1346.

LITERATURE

On April 8th, 1341, PETRARCH was crowned with the laurel crown at Rome, and before the middle of the following year he had finished his Latin poem *Africa*. In 1344 he wrote the first of his great political Odes "*Italia mia benche il parlar sia indarno*," and the most remarkable of his literary productions were the work of the next few years. An Ode to Cola di Rienza was written in 1347.⁵

¹ Vasari, Symonds, and Crowe and Cavalcaselle. ² Lindsay, i. 373.

³ *Arch. Stor.*, N. S. xvii. (1863), p. 140, cited in Crowe and Cav., iii. 185.

⁴ His son Tommaso also attained some eminence as an architect and sculptor. His most celebrated pupils were Orcagna and Balduccio di Pisa, who sculptured the beautiful monument to S. Peter Martyr in the church of S. Eustorgio at Milan.

⁵ Garnett, pp. 57, 58.

It was during this period that BOCCACCIO—the last of the great Florentine triumvirate of fourteenth-century literature—began to write; and though inferior in many respects to Dante and Petrarch, their work without his would have been incomplete. These three men were pre-eminently the pioneers of the Renaissance in the world of thought. They led the van in the movement which recovered for Italy (and through Italy for the world) the consciousness of intellectual liberty.¹ Their works made it manifest that human nature was vigorous enough to throw off the ecclesiastical bondage of the middle ages. Dante did this in the realm of spirit, Petrarch in the realm of mind, Boccaccio in the realm of sense. Obviously Boccaccio was working on a lower plane than his compeers, and the results of his work were of more questionable advantage to human progress. But if his influence made for licentiousness it was at least healthy in so far as it undermined a morbid asceticism. And if it degraded morals it indirectly gave to Art a helping hand in her upward course. The improvement which Boccaccio effected in prose he accomplished by “a return to nature”—the very principle which vitalised the works of Niccola Pisano and his followers. Thus directly and indirectly he was teaching the same lesson as the Giotteschi. If Dante and Petrarch paved the way for Luther and Galileo, Boccaccio facilitated the coming of Raphael. And though Boccaccio’s work may be less elevated than Dante’s and less refined than Petrarch’s, his place is little less important than theirs in the history of letters, for by the *Decameron* “he endowed his country with a classic prose and won for himself a unique place as the first modern novelist.”²

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO was born in 1313, probably in Florence, but possibly within twenty miles of it in the village of Certaldo.³ Most of his life was spent in Florence, but he had little affection either for it or for its citizens.⁴ When in Naples in 1341 he first

¹ Symonds, i. 10.

² Garnett, p. 82.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 83. A claim on behalf of Paris as his birthplace must be dismissed. Boccaccio’s birthplace will recall Dante’s lamentation over the enfranchisement of the Florentine *Contadini*:—

“Ma la cittadinanza, che e or mista
Di Campi e di Certaldo e di Figghine.
Pura vedeasi nell’ultimo artista.”—*Par.*, xvi. 49–51.

It is noteworthy that the three great Florentine poets were drawn from the three parties into which the society of Florence was divided—Dante from the nobles, Petrarch from the *popolo grasso*, and Boccaccio from the *popolo minuto*.

⁴ *Ency. Brit.*, iii. 844. He was only half Italian as his mother was French.

became acquainted with Maria (said to be a natural daughter of King Robert) by a lady who belonged to the same family as Thomas Aquinas, whom he afterwards immortalised as *Fiammetta*. At her command he wrote *Filocolo*, a work which marks the transition from the metrical to the prose romance,¹ and this was followed in 1346 by *L'Amorosa Fiammetta*, which may be regarded as the precursor of the modern psychological novel.² Between 1344 and 1350 Boccaccio was once more in Naples and it was then, at the desire of Queen Joanna, no less than at that of Fiammetta, that he wrote most of the hundred stories which in their collected form appeared in 1353 under the title of *Decameron*. It is this work that made Boccaccio famous and by which his name still lives. It is too well known to need more than the briefest notice. A party of young men and maidens, he tells us in his Introduction, have fled to a villa in the outskirts of Florence to escape the plague. In the gardens of this delightful retreat he makes them amuse each other by story-telling, and ten tales are told on each of their ten days' sojourn; the theme of all is love, using the word in no ideal sense. They are told with consummate art. All are very entertaining, some broadly (occasionally coarsely) humorous, and a few deeply pathetic. The *motif* of most is some indelicate incident which is, however, as a rule, handled with as much delicacy as its nature permits. "The whole book glows with the joyousness of a race discarding dreams for realities, scorning the terrors of a bygone creed, revelling in nature's liberty."³ And it is this, coupled with its style, "which for easy unaffected simplicity has never been surpassed,"⁴ that has given it a permanent place in literature.⁵

GIOVANNI VILLANI continued writing his history almost up to his death in 1348. He occupied an influential position until reduced to penury by the Bardi failure in 1345. He was in Florence during the tyranny of the Duke of Athens. Of the inestimable value of his writings mention has already been made.

¹ Garnett, p. 85.

² *Ibid.*, p. 86. Some other of his less-known works, viz. *Teseide*, *Arneto* and *L'Amorosa Vespione* were written about the same time and *Filostrato* in 1347.

³ Symonds, iv. 104.

⁴ Garnett, p. 90.

⁵ Boccaccio has been called the "Father of Italian Prose," *Ency. Brit.*, iii. 845; but his style does not seem to have been recognised as a model until the days of the Della Crusca Academy in the sixteenth century. It is censured by some modern Italians (Gino Capponi, i. 363-367).

CHAPTER VIII

1349-1374

THE CONDOTTIERE SYSTEM—COUNT LANDO IN FLORENTINE
TERRITORY—THE DOMINATION OF THE PARTE GUELFA—
ART AND LITERATURE

THE recuperative power of Florence was one of her most marked characteristics. Famine and pestilence, costly and not always successful wars, financial losses, and innumerable insurrections, left her still pursuing her old policy of expansion with energies apparently unimpaired. Within a year of the disappearance of the "Black Death" (as the great plague of 1348 was called), although she had lost three-fifths of her population, she was chastising the powerful Ubaldini for their predatory incursions into her territory, and wresting from them their Apennine stronghold of Montegemmoli;¹ and within two years she had reasserted her authority over Colle, San Gimignano and Pistoja, and had purchased Prato from Queen Joanna of Naples.²

In 1351 she was once more engaged in a struggle with the Visconti. Luchino Visconti,³ lord of Milan, died in 1349, and his brother Giovanni, the Archbishop of the city, had succeeded him. The union of temporal and spiritual authority in the head of the family made the Visconti family more formidable than ever, and Florence had good cause to be on her guard. The Archbishop having further increased his power by the purchase of Bologna from the brothers Pepoli, collected all the Ghibelline nobles that were left in Tuscany—the Ubaldini and Ubertini of the Apennines, the Pazzi of Val d'Arno, the Tarlati of Arezzo,

¹ M. Villani, lib. i. cap. 25.

² *Ibid.*, lib. i. cap. 74. Prato had been ceded to the Duke of Calabria.

³ Matteo I. died in 1322 and was succeeded by his eldest son Galeazzo I. (1322-1328), and his grandson Azzo (1328-1339). On Azzo's death Matteo's second son, Luchino, became lord of Milan.

and the Counts Guidi¹—with the object of subjugating Florence. His army crossed the Apennines on July 28th, and though his intentions were known, Florence was but ill prepared to resist an attack. No steps had been taken to put the city in a state of defence, for the government had fallen into inefficient hands. Men of the lowest class and of no ability (Matteo Villani tells us) had, by dint of canvassing and bribery, become members of the Signory, and made their way into other high offices, to the exclusion of wise and experienced citizens, thus leaving the guidance of public affairs to precedent or luck rather than the good sense and foresight of the rulers. "Every man is intent," he says, "during his two months of office on benefiting himself or his friends, or doing his enemies an ill turn by means of his official power."² Nevertheless Florence held her foe at bay for two years, when, through the intervention of Pope Clement VI., peace was concluded.³

In January, 1355, Charles of Luxemburg, King of Bohemia, who had been crowned King of the Romans many years before, crossed the Alps on his way to be crowned Emperor at Rome. Florence was a little uncertain what attitude to adopt towards him, and she sent an ambassador—no less a personage than Giovanni Boccaccio—to Avignon to ascertain whether Charles IV. came with the Pope's approbation. Having received a reply in the affirmative, she despatched an embassy to Pisa, where the Emperor then was, to inquire what were his intentions towards herself. The negotiations were not of an amicable character, but an agreement was ultimately entered into whereby the Emperor undertook not to come within ten miles of Florence, or to interfere with her government, and to confirm all the franchises and privileges of the commonwealth; and Florence undertook to pay him 100,000 florins down and 4,000 per annum for his life. This arrangement was so unpopular in Florence, through its implicit recognition of the imperial claim

¹ M. Villani, lib. i. cap. 78. Pisa, usually Ghibelline, held aloof, as she was then under the rule of Gambercorta, a rich merchant who was friendly to Florence.

² *Ibid.*, lib. ii. cap. 2.

³ Two members of the Medici family are mentioned in the account of this campaign, one of whom played an ignoble and the other a very honourable part. The former (whose Christian name is not given) abandoned a very strong position in the Apennines when commanding a sufficient force for its defence, and by so doing allowed the enemy to escape after they had been entrapped. The latter, by name Mario, gallantly cut his way at the head of some 100 men through the forces besieging Scarperia, and relieved the little town when hard pressed.

to suzerainty over the city, that it was rejected seven times by a parliament of the people before it was confirmed.¹ It was about this time that Florence, in common with many of her neighbours, began to suffer from the new mode of warfare which had made its appearance some half a century before, and which was destined to have such disastrous effects on Italian politics. The origin and development of the *Condottiere* system was due to a combination of causes peculiar to the peninsula.

The ceaseless feuds and petty wars, of which Italy was the scene during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were mainly waged by troops of cavaliers, who were drawn almost exclusively from the *grandi*. Infantry, recruited from the lower classes, were no doubt also employed, but they played a very inferior part in a battle, and were hardly expected to withstand a charge of cavalry. The nobles formed, in fact, the backbone of every army. They were the fighting element of the population, but by the operation of two distinct causes, at the end of the Guelph and Ghibelline struggle, they had been completely debilitated. The States in which the Guelphs had gained the ascendancy usually became republics, and in these the *grandi*, when not expatriated, were impoverished or otherwise reduced to impotence. Ghibelline States were, on the other hand, almost always despotisms, and it was the policy of the despots to endeavour to secure their position by repressing the nobles and by disarming all their subjects.²

And while this was taking place the demand for armaments was, if possible, on the increase. The supremacy of many of the princely rulers could only be maintained by force. Personal ambition and commercial and political rivalries were more active than ever. The schemes of the Visconti, the disputed Neapolitan succession, and the "Babylonish captivity" of the Papacy at Avignon, continued to keep Italy in a state of ferment. Yet the demand for troops could not be supplied from any national source. The class from which armies had been drawn was fast disappearing, and the rest of the community was destitute of military spirit. It was a spirit of industrialism that was then the mainspring of Italian prosperity. The rich merchants, of whom the new aristocracy was composed, had neither time nor inclination for military training. The management of their vast trading establishments, with agencies in distant lands,

¹ M. Villani, lib. iv. cap. 70.

² Symonds, i. 77.

required the whole of their energies. Nor were they soldiers by tradition. For them military training was scarcely less a calamity than the miseries of war. Indeed, as they increased in wealth and refinement, they displayed an increased reluctance to endure the hardships of the field, and the more they had to lose, the less willing and able were they to defend it.¹ And there was another spirit just beginning to work that was no less antagonistic to martial ardour than the spirit of industrialism. The movement, already referred to, of which Giotto and Petrarch were the pioneers, was beginning to convert Italy into a nation of artists, scholars, and *litterati*, and though before the close of the next century it had enabled her to win undying glory in the field of culture, it unfitted her for winning it on the field of battle. Nor was there any aptitude for arms to be found among the lower classes. Feudalism in the northern nations being founded on military service, had converted the peasantry into hardy and patriotic soldiers; but in Italy, where the feudal system never really took root, this was not so.

Under these circumstances there was but one solution possible, and it had been both indicated and facilitated by past events. This was the employment of mercenary troops. In Florence the authority of Charles of Anjou, of Count Guido Novello, and of Charles of Valois had been maintained by the aid of German horsemen. The emperors, when they periodically descended into Italy for the purpose of asserting their rights or replenishing their exchequers, were usually accompanied by armies, a part of which they sometimes left behind them. This was notably the case when a band of Louis of Bavaria's troopers deserted from his standard and possessed themselves of Lucca, which they retained until bribed to depart.² Hence there were a considerable number of foreigners scattered about over Italy who were trained to arms and eager for employment. As was but natural, they gradually congregated together at different centres, either as the bodyguard of some Ghibelline chief³ or as a roving troop under a commander who obtained

¹ Dennistoun, i. 12. The wealthy Florentines had learned from Ramondo at Altopascio that they could purchase immunity from military service.

² Riccotti, II, 39.

³ The despots of some of the smaller Italian states sometimes developed into *condottiere*, as was the case with Montefeltro of Urbino and the Malatesta of Rimini. Uguccione della Faggiola and Castruccio Castracane belonged to the *condottieri* type, but they did not habitually sell their services.

the title of *condottiere*, and who was ready to sell the services of his company to the highest bidder. The demand for these bands was so great and the pay offered so high, that during the first half of the fifteenth century there were generally three or four in existence, each of which was numbered by thousands. At first the companies were composed exclusively of foreigners under foreign captains, but before the close of the fourteenth century these had been superseded by Italian bands led by native *condottieri*.¹

The evils of such a system are only too obvious. Patriotism and all soldierly virtues languished among the employers. National struggles were no longer determined by national courage, endurance, or generalship, but by the length of the national purse. And the effects on the employed were even more demoralising. They fought first on one side and then on the other, irrespective of country, creed, or the justness of the cause. By war they gained their livelihood, and consequently wars were unnecessarily provoked and unduly prolonged. Each *condottiere* regarded his troop as his stock-in-trade, and would never expose it to any avoidable danger. Nor was a slain adversary as desirable as a prisoner who could be ransomed. Hence the aim of each side was a bloodless victory, and a battle was often a mere sham fight. Machiavelli asserts that on one occasion, after several hours' fighting, only one man was killed, and that his death was occasioned by a fall from his horse.² It frequently happened that months were spent by generals in manœuvres and counter-manœuvres with the object of placing their opponents in such a position as would force them to surrender. And when the *condottieri* awoke to a sense of their own power they were incessantly plotting, often successfully, to carve lordships for themselves out of some province which they had been summoned to aid or to subdue, and

¹ The most famous of the foreign *condottieri* were the Duke of Guarnieri, Fra Moriale, Count Lando and Sir John Hawkwood; and of the Italian, Alberico da Barbiano, Andrea Braccio da Montone, Sforza Attendolo, Il Carmagnola, Niccolò Forzebraccio, Francesco Sforza, Nicolò Piccinino, Bartolommeo Colleoni, Jacopo Piccinino, Federigo d'Urbino, Roberto da Sanseverino, members of the Orsini, Colonna and Vitelli families, the Duke of Valentino (Cæsar Borgia), Giovanni de' Medici (delle Bande Nere) and Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino (Ricotti, *Storia delle Compagnie di Ventura in Italia*).

² But these harmless engagements only occurred when the system was fully developed. In some of the battles in which Hawkwood was engaged the slain were numbered by thousands.

"Italy beheld the spectacle of moving despotisms, armed and mounted, seeking to effect establishment upon the weakest, worst-defended points of the peninsula."¹

The first bands of mercenaries, however, produced an evil of a different character. Whenever they were thrown out of employ they were nothing more nor less than vast gangs of banditti who lived upon plunder, inflicting intolerable outrages on the inhabitants of large districts, and they became such objects of terror that the richer States often paid them large sums of money to evacuate their territories. A German ruffian, named Werner (Italianised into Guarnieri), who impiously but accurately styled himself "The enemy of God, of Pity, and of Mercy," at the head of some 1,500 or 2,000 horsemen² had thus levied blackmail on the lord of Bologna in 1353; and shortly afterwards Monreal, a knight of Provence, who was known in Italy as "Fra Moriale," with a band called "The Great Company," that is said to have numbered no less than 5,000 cavalry and 1,500 or 2,000 infantry, was pursuing the same tactics.³ Florence paid 25,000 and Pisa 16,000 florins to obtain temporary immunity from the depredations of this horde of miscreants. Moriale then imprudently went to Rome where Cola di Rienzi gave him a hospitable welcome, and then, probably for the sake of his wealth, caused him to be arrested and executed.⁴ The command of the Great Company now fell to Conrad, Count of Lando, who in 1356 threatened the Florentines with an incursion. With the same short-sighted policy as before they paid him 16,000 florins on his giving an undertaking that he would not enter their territory for three years. In 1358 the services of Lando and his company were engaged by Siena, who was at war with Perugia, but as he was in Romagna he could not join the Sienese forces without passing over Florentine ground. He applied to the Signory for permission to be allowed to do so, and, though he at first met with a refusal, it was ultimately arranged that his company should be permitted to traverse an outlying part of the domain of the Republic through a pass in the Apennines which leads

¹ Symonds, i. 78. It was, however, necessary that they should have some place into which they could retire for winter quarters and lay up stores. For this purpose the lordship of Bagnacavallo and Cotignola was conferred on Hawkwood by Pope Gregory XI. (Burckhardt, p. 22).

² Ricotti. ³ M. Villani, lib. iii. cap. 89; Gino Capponi, i. 292.

⁴ Villari; *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 801. Gino Capponi (vol. i. p. 293) does not believe that Rienzi was actuated by avarice. However this may be, there is no doubt that Fra Moriale got no more than his deserts.

by Belforte and Dicomano to Bibbiena,¹ and that the Signory should victual them while on Florentine soil. The company do not seem to have been satisfied with the rations provided for them, and they pillaged the villages through which they passed. The inhabitants were so incensed that they rose *en masse*, and when the bandit army was passing through a narrow defile it was assailed with a shower of rocks and stones from the mountain sides. The heavily armed cavalry were at such a disadvantage that a panic set in, and the peasants, descending from the heights which they occupied, attacked them hand to hand. Lando was taken prisoner, 300 of his men were killed, more than 1,000 horses and much gold was captured, and the bulk of his army was hemmed in, in a gorge, with only provisions for three days. Unfortunately three of the four Florentine ambassadors,² who had been sent to arrange terms with Lando, were with his troops, and, no doubt prompted by consideration for their personal safety, they interfered to stay the furious onslaught of the peasantry. Had they not done so "that plague of Italy might have been easily extinguished."³ The Signory, on hearing the news, resolved that no food should be supplied to the freebooters, or any steps taken to prevent the peasants from massacring them. But the ambassadors, although they had been summoned to return home, took upon themselves to protect Lando's force while it proceeded to Vicchio, where provisions were obtainable. There is but little doubt that they would have been put to death had they not done so. Count Lando, who was a prisoner in one of the castles of the Ubaldini, was liberated about the same time.

Florence had to pay dearly for the pusillanimity of her representatives, but she learned wisdom by experience.

In 1359, when Count Lando again threatened to ravage Tuscany, she refused to submit to his demands, although Perugia, Siena, and Pisa were weak enough to do so, and she levied an army to check his progress, which she placed under the command of Pandolfo Malatesta, lord of Rimini. Malatesta's forces came into close quarters with the bandits on July 10th, 1359, between Pistoja and Pescia, but Lando declined to give battle, and marched precipitately towards Genoa on the night of July 20th.

¹ Gino Caponi, i. 296.

² Their names were Manno Donati, Giovanni de' Medici, Amerigo Cavalcanti and Rinieri Peruzzi.

³ Ammirato, iii. 227.

It was impossible to follow him without invading the territory of a friendly state. "But such had been the energy and prudence of Malatesta and so great the valour of the Florentines, who had been at length thoroughly roused, and were now determined to settle matters once for all with so infamous an enemy, that the Great Company never again dared show its face in Tuscany."¹

During the alarm occasioned by Fra Moriale's inroad into Tuscany, Florence was also in dread of domestic disorder. In 1353 there had been a fresh burst of that lawlessness which followed the plague of 1348. Night after night burglaries occurred, and for some time the perpetrators evaded detection. At length it was discovered that they had been committed by a gang of young bloods—scions of the noblest families—who had been in the habit of blocking both ends of a street with bands of music, which appeared to passers-by to be occupied in serenading, and of breaking into and rifling one of the intermediate houses. Bordone Bordoni was taken red-handed, and though his powerful connections used all their influence to rescue him from punishment, the people insisted that the law should be carried out, and he was executed. This led to a quarrel between the houses of Bordoni and Mangioni, which ended in an affray. The two rival houses of Ricci and Albizzi espoused opposite sides, and their appearance in arms threw the city into a tumult, as they were the leaders of hostile factions, and open strife between them would have involved the whole city in civil war. This catastrophe was averted by the prompt action of the *podestà*, but the animosity between the two families remained unabated. The feud between them, which was one of old standing, was now carried on with different weapons. They were both supporters of the Guelph cause, but the Ricci, in order to damage their opponents in public estimation, sedulously asserted that the Albizzi could not be genuine Guelphs, because they originally came from the Ghibelline city of Arezzo.² This report was the more readily believed on account of the advent of Charles of Luxemburg, as even now the presence of an Emperor in Italy caused the Guelphs some little uneasiness. Ugucione, the head of the Ricci family, on the pretext that certain state secrets had been divulged to Charles when at Pisa, proposed that a law should be passed making any Ghibelline holding office liable to a fine of 500 florins. The proposal was made in the expectation

¹ Ammirato, iii. 236.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 195.

that the Albizzi would oppose it, and so give colour to the report as to their Ghibelline tendencies. But Piero degli Albizzi, the head of the house, was too astute to fall into the trap, and he came expressly from his country villa to support the proposition.¹ The bill became law, but as it had been introduced for personal ends, and not because it was needed, it was allowed to remain a dead letter. Three years later, however, it was re-enacted in a more rigorous form.

The *Parte Guelfa* was also a source of political danger. The circumstances under which that organisation originated have been already noticed. It had now been in existence nearly a century, and it had done its work. Ghibellinism, at least in Florence, was to all intents and purposes suppressed. The party names, however, still lingered on; and the new aristocracy, that had come into existence since the extinction of the old noblesse, usually designated themselves Guelphs, while they described as Ghibellines all whom they desired to injure. It was some of these Guelph families (*Le Famiglie*) who, as we have seen, had contrived to monopolise an undue share of political power, and the *Parte Guelfa*, with its immense wealth and perfect organisation, was found too useful an instrument for the furthering of their designs to be allowed to disappear. It had never been an unmixed good, but it had on the whole, in its early days, made for liberty of a kind. Henceforth it was only an engine of oppression and malevolence.

The Captains of the Party who came into office in 1357 were Guelfo Gherardini, Geri de' Pazzi, Tommaso Brancacci, and Simone Simonetti, thoroughly unprincipled men² who, Ammirato says, must have been "born for the public ruin."³ They at once set themselves to still further increase their power, and this they effected under cover of anti-Ghibelline legislation. A law had been passed some years before called the *Divieto*, which prohibited two members of the same family (*i.e.* all descended from a common ancestor) from holding office together. As the pedigrees of the upper classes were well known, and many of the lower classes did not know the names of their own grandfathers,⁴ more of the former than of the latter were excluded from office by the operation of this law, and much power was thereby thrown

¹ Ammirato, iii. 192.

² "di pessima e iniqua condizione" (M. Villani, lib. viii. cap. 24).

³ Ammirato, iii. 221.

⁴ Napier ii. 232.

into the hands of the *popolo minuto*.¹ The *Divieto* was exceedingly displeasing, not only to the chiefs of the *Parte Guelfa*, but to the whole of the *popolo grasso*, and this displeasure the four Captains turned to account. By pretending to an accession of zeal for the Guelph cause and by representing that the measure they were about to introduce was intended to counteract the action of the *Divieto*, they succeeded in passing a statute by which it was provided that any citizen or subject of Florence, not being a "genuine Guelph," who had held, or in future should hold, any public office, should be liable to capital punishment or fine. It was also provided that accusations under this Act might be made either openly or secretly to the Captains of the *Parte Guelfa*, who, if the accusations were supported by six credible witnesses, might pass sentence *without hearing the accused in his defence*. Those who were fined and the descendants of those who were executed were disqualified for ever from holding any official position, and the mere fact of an accusation having been made, *even if not proved*, might entail disfranchisement.² All persons whom this terrible tribunal suspected, or for private reasons alleged that they suspected, of not being genuine Guelphs were "admonished." Those who had thus been formally warned received the name of *Ammoniti* or *Ammonizioni*. This infamous law was displeasing to many thoroughgoing Guelphs, and the Signory at first refused to sanction it, but they were frightened into doing so by an insinuation on the part of the Captains that they were not "genuine Guelphs." An actual panic prevailed as soon as it was passed, but no one dared, even by a hint, to question its equity for fear of being suspected of Ghibelline leanings. On the contrary, all classes tried to curry favour with Captains who, without doubt, held the lives and fortunes of their fellow-citizens in their hands.³

The chiefs of the Party thought it expedient to exercise their new powers with some show of moderation, and, during the first forty days after the law came into operation, they contented themselves with disfranchising only eighteen citizens.⁴ Subsequently, however, they cast all regard for appearances to the wind. They did not even pay any attention to the list of accu-

¹ M. Villani, lib. viii. cap. 24. Moreover unscrupulous men got into office by bribery to the exclusion of those who were honourable and respected. But M. Villani adds that they did not dare to do much mischief.

² Ammirato, iii. 221.

³ M. Villani, lib. viii. cap. 31.

⁴ Ammirato, iii. 222.

sations, but each accused whom he pleased, and the other three acquiesced almost as a matter of course. "Hast thou no enemy?" was the question asked amongst them. "Consent to admonish mine, and I will do the same by thine."¹ The citizens would fain have concealed the terror which the proceedings of these lay inquisitors occasioned, but it found expression in their looks, and for some months a general gloom overshadowed the city.² In the following year (1358), however, they regained sufficient courage to procure a slight mitigation of the evil, and the *Parte Guelfa*, yielding to pressure, increased the number of their Captains to six by the addition of two who were always to be taken from the people.³ Recourse was also had to less legitimate methods. Some sought personal safety by purchasing the goodwill of those in power, and in 1360 bribery on an alarming scale was exposed. Others, comprising members of many of the great families who were not connected with the ruling clique, conspired to overthrow the government.⁴ The plot was divulged by Bartolommeo de' Medici⁵ to his brother Salvestro, who was in office and who, though no friend of the Captains, did not know of its existence. Two of the ringleaders were beheaded, many influential citizens were exiled, and the plot was suppressed. Notwithstanding all efforts to curb it the power of "the Party" seems to have been practically unimpaired, for between 1357 and 1366 no less than 200 families were disfranchised. In the latter year, however, some successful opposition to their tyranny was offered by Ugucione de' Ricci, whose courage cannot but be admired, although he was doubtless influenced by personal motives. His abortive attempt, in 1354, to undermine the influence of the Albizzi, had resulted in placing in their hands the weapons he had forged for their destruction. By the action of legislation of which he was the promoter, the government of the State was now virtually in the hands of a triumvirate, consisting of Piero degli Albizzi, Lapo di Castiglionchio, and Carlo Strozzi. Disappointed at his failure, for twelve years he bided his time, until in 1366 the unwarrantable admonition of Niccolò Monacci, who had been secretary of the republic and was a

¹ Coppo Stefani, lib. ix. rub. 674.

² Leonardo Aretino.

³ M. Villani, lib. viii. cap. 32; Ammirato, iii. 222. Probably from the *popolo minuto*, but the word used is *popolani*.

⁴ Some of the Medici, Frescobaldi, Pazzi, Donati, Gherardini, Rossi, Adimari, and Brunelleschi were implicated.

⁵ Or perhaps Andrea. The brothers Bartolommeo and Andrea were both implicated (Litta, Medici Pedigree, Table V.).

man universally respected, gave him the opportunity for which he had been waiting. He brought the matter before the Signory and succeeded in obtaining a reversal of the sentence.¹

Encouraged by this success he attacked the constitution of the executive of the *Parte Guelfa*, and at his instance the number of Captains was increased to nine, five of whom were to be taken from the *popolani grassi*, two from the *Arti Minori*, and two were to be *grandi*. He also procured the passing of other reforms. It was enacted that no one should be declared a Ghibelline unless two-thirds of the Captains voted for the motion. At the same time, a committee consisting of the nine Captains and twenty-four good Guelphs, was established, and it was provided that no one should be indicted before Captains, unless twenty-two members of this committee voted in favour of a true bill, after hearing the accused in his own defence.² Mild as these measures were, the tyranny of the triumvirate was restrained by them for the next five years.

While Florence was more or less passively enduring the heavy yoke of the *Parte Guelfa* she was energetically waging war with Pisa. For some past years her commerce had suffered from the hostile tariffs imposed on goods passing through the Porto Pisano, and to protect herself against these she had made use of the little harbour of Telamone in the Maremma.³ She had also hired galleys from France and Naples which, in 1356, she had placed under the control of a new board entitled the *Dieci di Mare*. Thus Florence became for the first time a maritime power. In 1361 she acquired Volterra, when Pisa was negotiating for its purchase, and this caused the existing jealousy between the two states to break out into open hostilities. The Florentine vessels took possession of Porto Pisano in 1362 and captured the great iron chain by which the port of Pisa was closed. This trophy hung over the west door of the Baptistery at Florence from 1363 to 1848 when it was returned to Pisa.⁴

The war was continued, notwithstanding the reappearance of pestilence, and the Pisans were twice defeated, once under the walls of their city (1363). The Florentines did not attempt to enter it, contenting themselves with insulting their foes in the usual fashion, by striking coins to commemorate the event within their sight.

¹ Napier, ii. 237.

² Ammirato, iii. 311-320.

³ M. Villani, lib. vi. cap. 48, 61.

⁴ It is now in the Campo Santo at Pisa.

The Pisans now obtained the aid of a band of English mercenaries known (probably from the splendour of their equipment) as the "White Company,"¹ which was commanded by Sir John Hawkwood, who subsequently rendered signal services to Florence. The Florentine general, Piero de' Farnesi, had been anxious to secure their services, maintaining that from the days of Cæsar to his own time there had never been better soldiers, but the gonfalonier, who hated the very name of the companies, refused his sanction.² Farnese thereupon hastened on an engagement before the arrival of the White Company, and after a hard-fought battle he defeated the Pisans and took their general prisoner. During the fight his own horse was killed under him, and jumping on to a sumpter mule he led his forces to victory. This incident was commemorated by a statue in wood of Farnese in armour, seated on a mule, which was placed over his monument in Florence Cathedral.³ Shortly after this victory he died of the plague, the White Company joined the Pisan army, and the tide of fortune began to turn against Florence.

"*Gli Otto della Guerra*," as the board in charge of the war were called, had now to look about for a new commander of the Florentine army, and, remembering the ability which Pandolfo Malatesta had displayed when Count Lando's company was expelled from Tuscany, they determined to offer the post to him. With apparent reluctance he accepted the appointment for two months, but his hesitation was probably affected, as it is certain that from the first he had formed the design of attempting to make himself lord of Florence. The condition of affairs in that city

¹ It was by this company that the practice of counting cavalry by "lances" was introduced into Italy. Previously the German troopers had been counted singly, and were known as *barbute* from their helmets. Each lance consisted of a knight (*caporale*), a squire (*piatta*), and a page (*ragazzo*), all of whom were mounted. Both knight and squire wore armour, but the latter was not so completely enveloped in mail as the former. They were armed with swords, daggers, and bows slung across their backs, but their principal weapon was a long and heavy lance requiring two men to wield it. They sometimes fought on horseback, but more often on foot, when the pages held the horses around while the knights and squires (each of whom held a lance between them) formed a circle "like a hedgehog." They were usually accompanied by infantry who carried long bows. The White Company at this time numbered 5,000 men—1,000 lances and 2,000 archers. It was at first commanded by a German, Albert Stertz. When under Hawkwood it seems to have been better disciplined than Werner's or Fra Moriale's bands, but hardly deserving the praise bestowed on it by Trollope (vol. ii. p. 154). See Ricotti, ii. 138; *Archivio Storico*, vol. xv. p. xlii.; *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xxv. 236-242; Napier, ii. 302; *Sir John Hawkwood*, by Temple-Leader, p. 39.

² Ammirato, iii. 270. ³ It remained there till 1842 when it fell to pieces.

was favourable to such a scheme. The discontent occasioned by frequent admonitions was widespread. Old and experienced citizens complained that they were excluded from office, while youths, scarcely out of their teens, were placed in responsible positions. Party spirit ran high, and the republic was a prey to secret hatred and private avarice.¹ Pandolfo arrived in Florence on August 13th, 1363, and commenced the campaign with deliberate negligence.

After sustaining a serious defeat, which he had courted, he returned to Florence in pretended alarm, and urged that for the protection of the city it was essential that absolute authority, both within and without the city, should be conferred on him. But the *Consiglio de' Richiesti*,² to whom the matter was referred, had not forgotten the lordship of the Duke of Athens, and Pandolfo was sent back to his camp with only his military command.³ He did not, however, abandon his intention, but continued to affect alarm for the safety of Florence, and did not attempt to prevent the enemy from encamping at Ripoli within two miles of its walls. A real terror now pervaded the city, for the courage, the mobility, and the indifference to the vicissitudes of weather, displayed by the White Company had much impressed the Florentines, and Filippo Villani says that the country folk believed that the English were lions.⁴ After a few weeks the enemy retreated, laden with plunder, into Pisan territory.

Contrary to custom Hawkwood, who was now commander-in-chief of the Pisan forces, did not retire into winter quarters, but notwithstanding unusually severe weather carried on the war in the Val-di-Nievole. He was, however, compelled to withdraw. In the following year (1364) Pandolfo Malatesta, thinking that the Florentines considered his services indispensable, applied for leave of absence. Much to his surprise his application was granted with an intimation that he would not be required to return. But for former services he would probably have paid for his treachery with his head.

In July Galeotto Malatesta, an uncle of Pandolfo, who had

¹ F. Villani, cap. 65.

² The *Consiglio de' Richiesti* was an extraordinary council to which every citizen who had ever held one of the higher offices of state, or enjoyed a great reputation, was summoned. Meetings of this council were often numerously attended, and fairly represented public opinion (Napier, ii. 297, note).

³ F. Villani, cap. 69.

⁴ F. Villani, cap. 70. The nurses used the word *Inglese* to frighten naughty children (Napier, ii. 299).

a great military reputation, was appointed commander of the Florentine forces, and almost immediately afterwards he defeated Hawkwood near Cascina, a little town seven miles from Pisa, killing 1,000 men and taking 2,000 prisoners.¹ All foreigners captured were liberated, but the Pisans were led back in triumph to Florence, where they were compelled to kiss the old Marzocco² (which stood outside the Palazzo Vecchio, near where the bronze copy now stands) and to work at building the famous "Tetto de' Pisani," which stood in the Piazza della Signoria facing the Palazzo Vecchio, until its removal in 1866.³ Galeotto did not follow up his victory, and his subsequent tactics gave rise to a suspicion that he was playing into his nephew's hand. This, coupled with insubordination among the mercenaries and the heavy expense of the war, led the Florentines to open negotiations with Pisa, and a treaty of peace was concluded under which Pisa ceded Pietrabuona to Florence, and agreed to pay an indemnity of 10,000 florins a year for ten years, and to remove hostile tariffs off Florentine goods. In spite of these concessions, so costly had the war been to Florence that it is doubtful whether she or Pisa suffered most by it.

In 1367 an attempt was made to inveigle her into another war. Pope Urban V., having succeeded through the energy and sagacity of Cardinal Albornoz in reducing the States of the Church to obedience,⁴ was endeavouring to re-establish the papacy at Rome. For this purpose he entered into league with the Emperor Charles IV., Queen Joanna of Naples, and the lords of Ferrara, Mantua, and Padua, with the object of chastising the Visconti,⁵ who had for some time past treated the Pope

¹ Trollope, ii. 147.

² It is now in the Bargello (Horner, i. 232).

³ *Ibid.*, 197. It was for many years used as a post office.

⁴ During the sojourn of the popes at Avignon they had been despoiled of almost all their dominions. Francesco Ordelaffi of Forlì, Gentile Mogliano of Fermo, the Malatesta of Rimini, and the Polenta of Ravenna had usurped the sovereignty of States which belonged to the Church. These were all now recovered for the Pope by Albornoz. Their reduction was finally completed by the aid of a band of Breton mercenaries, which had been specially chosen by Gregory VII. because it was more ferocious than any other company (*Arch. Stor.*, vol. xv. p. xlv.).

⁵ On the death of Archbishop Giovanni Visconti, in 1354, his dominions were divided among the three sons of his brother Stefano. Matteo, the eldest, became lord of Parma, Placentia, Lodi, Bobbio, and Bologna; Bernabò, the second, of Crema, Cremona, Brescia, and Bergamo; and Galeazzo, the youngest, of Como, Navara, Vercelli, Asti, Tortona, and Alexandria. In 1355 Matteo was assassinated by order of his brothers, who

and his anathemas with ostentatious contempt. Florence refused to join the league, and thereby gave great umbrage to Pope Urban. She had to arm in defence of her own liberties, as the Emperor, having played her false by making terms with the Visconti, was marching southwards. But the imperial claims were satisfied in 1368 by a substantial money payment, and she remained unmolested. She had, however, in the following year to take up arms again to protect her own dominions. One of her dependencies, San Miniato al Tedesco, had revolted, and Bernabò Visconti, on the plea that he was imperial vicar of Tuscany, had stepped in to aid the rebels. She succeeded in recovering San Miniato, and then joined the league in order to chastise Visconti for his interference. Her efforts did not meet with success, as an army which she sent into Lombardy was defeated by Hawkwood, and in 1371 peace was concluded.

While this war was in progress, Florence, in a fit of unwonted magnanimity towards Lucca (whom she had been persistently endeavouring to enslave), aided that city in regaining its independence after a servitude of fifty-six years. Not only did the Signory assist Lucca with 25,000 florins with which to rid herself of the presence of the imperial vicar, but "because there was no one left among the Lucchese who could remember having looked liberty in the face, the Florentines, besides money, sent some of their wisest and most eminent citizens, who had for a long time taken part in the government of the republic, to guide the city so long accustomed to servitude, in the management of its new-found freedom."¹

Notwithstanding all endeavours to abate the authority of the *Parte Guelfa* it continued to flourish, and under the guidance of Piero degli Albizzi it had even increased in power. The Albizzi family was now more influential than any other in Florence, and they made no secret of their intention of converting the republic into an oligarchy such as that at Venice. Their only opponent worth reckoning with was Uguccone de' Ricci, who had succeeded in placing some legislative checks

divided his dominions between them, Bernabò reigning in Milan (to 1385) and Galeazzo in Parma (to 1378). Violante, a daughter of Galeazzo, married in 1368 Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the son of Edward III., King of England. The marriage festivities were on a scale of such magnificence as to provoke comment even in those days of insolent display.

¹ Ammirato, iv. 29.

on the actions of the "Captains." Much therefore was hoped by those who groaned beneath the tyranny of the *Parte Guelfa* when Uguccone became gonfalonier, and proportionally great was their consternation when it became known that he had been seduced by Carlo Strozzi into joining the Albizzi faction. The *popolo minuto* were not slow to appreciate the danger of this alliance, knowing well that the remnant of liberty that was left to them would disappear when the new aristocracy ceased to be a house divided against itself.

The Captains of the *Parte Guelfa*, gaining courage from the accession of Uguccone's support, now made an audacious attack on the constitution, and carried a measure which placed them beyond the pale of public criticism, and made them *de facto* the paramount authority in the State. This was initiated, in accordance with authorised procedure, by the presentation of a petition. The petitioners prayed for a decree forbidding the Signory to deliberate upon any bill affecting "the Party," unless it had been previously discussed and approved by that body. This preposterous proposal was twice rejected by the Signory, but on its second rejection Bartolo Simonetti, one of the priors, who was noted for his insolence, started up and exclaimed, "We will soon see who gave these white beans¹ and who are the enemies of the *Parte Guelfa*." He then demanded of every member present in turn if he was a Guelph, and compelled each to put in a black bean.²

Thus, by sheer effrontery and defiance of constitutional forms, one individual carried a measure which for a time subverted the authority of the chief assembly in the State. Another instance of the arbitrary and lawless manner in which the affairs of "the Party" were conducted at this time is to be found in the admonition of a citizen named Zanobi Macinghi, whose name had been drawn for the post of gonfalonier of one of the companies. For some private reason he had incurred the dislike of Rosso de' Ricci, one of the Captains of the Party, who at one of their meetings, in order to disqualify him for office, moved that he should be admonished. The proposal was rejected three times, and the chairman declined to allow it to be put to the meeting again; but Rosso declared that he would put it a hundred times, if necessary, and being still unsuccessful he somehow contrived

¹ In Florence the black beans in the ballot-box signified "yes," and the white beans "no."

² Ammirato, iv. 39.

that the matter should be referred to a meeting of the *Richiesti*, and that body was called together at two o'clock in the morning. He kept the meeting sitting during the rest of the night, at the end of which, from sheer exhaustion, the members present consented to issue the admonition.

These indecent violations of orderly procedure aroused considerable indignation. Although it was a capital offence to attend a secret meeting, such meetings were constantly held to consider the state of affairs. About a hundred citizens of rank resorted to the house of Simone Peruzzi, who feigned sickness as a pretext for their reception for the purpose of devising a remedy for existing evils. When these meetings were noticed the malcontents threw off the veil of secrecy, and held a public meeting in the church of San Piero Scheraggio. Among those present were Salvestro de' Medici, Lapo di Castiglionchio (who seems to have broken with the Albizzi for a short time), and others who held high offices. After discussing the matters which had brought them together they waited on the Signory, and Machiavelli puts into the mouth of one of them a long argumentative speech, which is an epitome of the faction troubles from which Florence had suffered, with an analysis of their causes. The Signory, moved, it is said, by the cogency of this reasoning, referred the grievances complained of to the *Consiglio de' Richiesti*. When the matter was discussed by that body a stormy scene ensued. The *rapprochement* between the Albizzi and Ricci must have come to an end, as one of the former family accused Uguccione de' Ricci of having intrigued for the installation of Bernarbò Visconti¹ as lord of Florence. Giorgio, Uguccione's brother, denied the charge, and retorted that Francesco de' Albizzi had been heard to boast that, despite the semblance of liberty preserved by Florence, his family were as much its lords as the house of d'Este were of Ferrara. Lapo Castiglionchio and other speakers charged both the Ricci and the Albizzi with desiring to enslave their country. Such disorder ensued that the Signory dissolved the meeting, and deliberated in private on what they had heard. A *Balla* consisting of fifty-six members was ultimately appointed, who excluded Piero degli Albizzi and Uguccione de' Ricci, and two other members of each family from every office, except service on the *Parte Guelfa*, for a term of five years, and they deprived ninety-six of their followers of appointments. A

¹ Alluding to the conspiracy divulged by Bartolommeo de' Medici.

small board of ten citizens was appointed, whose duty it was to prevent the formation of factions and generally to protect the freedom of the city, who were called the "Ten of Liberty"; and a large and representative council, comprising one hundred and ninety members, was established, to whom important matters, such as the declaration of war and concluding of peace, were to be referred. And in order to check corruption, which was still prevalent, citizens were forbidden to enter the Palazzo della Signoria except on days of public audience.

These measures, although apparently treating the two rival factions with impartiality, really inflicted severer punishment on the Ricci than on the Albizzi, because the position of the latter in the *Parte Guelfa* (where their influence was paramount) was not interfered with. When Piero degli Albizzi was informed of the new enactments, he exclaimed, "These will do well enough if they go no further!" That these laws had not as much effect as was expected is evident, for in 1373, at the instance of Megliore Guadagni, the exclusion from office of the three Albizzi and three Ricci was extended to the whole of their families.¹

Although the influence of these two great houses was reduced, the pernicious power of the *Parte Guelfa* was scarcely touched. Piero Petriboni, one of the priors for Santo Spirito, had the courage to introduce a bill in 1373 declaring all admonitions invalid that had not been approved by the Signory; but this bill was thrown out, and he was accused of attempting to destroy the basis of Florentine liberty! He only escaped with his head by pleading for mercy with a halter round his neck.

Undaunted by Petriboni's failure, in 1374 another prior, Giovanni Magalotti, attempted to bring about the same beneficent reform. He summoned a meeting of the *Consiglio de' Richiesti*, and employed all his eloquence to persuade them that the system of admonitions was fast ruining the republic. In spite of violent opposition on the part of Lapo di Castiglionchio (who had now returned to the Albizzi faction), a resolution was passed recommending the Signory to put an end to admonitions. But the Captains by dilatory tactics prevented the consideration of the recommendation by the Signory for a time, and then, legislative business having been dislocated by a reappearance of the plague, the matter was allowed to drop. So the only result of Magalotti's

¹ According to two historians, this exclusion was for ten years (Napier, ii. 361, note).

gallant attempt to free his fellow-citizens from a tyranny almost as oppressive as that of the Duke of Athens, was that he was noted in the books of the Captains as a suspected Ghibelline.

While these events were taking place in Florence she was engaged in a petty war with the Ubaldini (not an unfrequent occurrence), who had been a source of much annoyance to her for centuries. Mainardo, the head of the clan, was captured, and as his family refused to ransom him he was barbarously executed. The family were shortly afterwards completely subjugated, and many of them were enrolled as citizens of Florence.

ART AND LITERATURE

1349-1374

ARCHITECTS	SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	AUTHORS
Taddeo Gaddi	Alberto Arnoldi	Taddeo Gaddi	Petrarch
		Giacomo da Casentino	Boccaccio
		Giovanni da Milano	Matteo Villani
		Agnolo Gaddi	Filippo Villani
		Orcagna	

PAINTING, SCULPTURE, AND ARCHITECTURE

The effects of the Black Death on Italian Art were not visible for a generation. It may be, however, that it was fears as to their future occasioned by this calamity which induced the artists who survived to seek strength in co-operation and form themselves into an association. But, be this as it may, in 1349 the painters of Florence established the Guild of S. Luke.¹ This society must not be classed with the *Arti*, as it had no sort of political status.² It had, however, ordinances regulating the mode of election and number of its officers, the admission of members, etc., which remained in force until superseded by new ones in the time of Duke Cosimo.³

¹ It was known as the *Compagnia* or *Fraternità* di San Lucca, but it was dedicated to the Virgin, SS. John the Baptist, Zenobia, and Reparata, as well as to S. Luke.

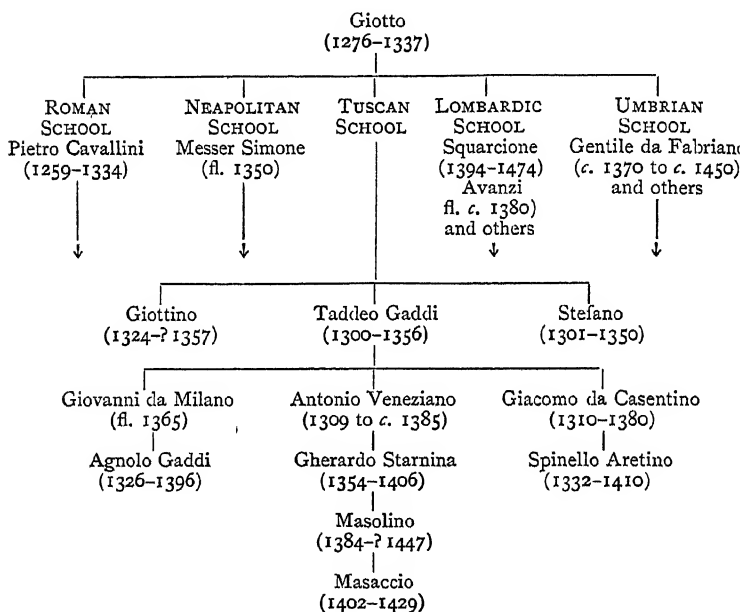
² Possibly it was not sufficiently mercantile to be allowed a voice in the government, or possibly its members preferred to be free from the turbulence of public life.

³ Vasari, i. 255. These ordinances are printed in Gayes' *Carteggio*, and the register of members of the Guild will be found in Guarlandi. The statutes of the Sienese Society of Artists were more elaborate (Crowe and Cav., ii. 3).

TADDEO GADDI died in 1366. Most of his time after 1338 was probably devoted to superintending the erection of Giotto's campanile, but some of the numerous frescoes that he painted in Florence must have been executed during this period. Almost all of these have unfortunately perished, but a Last Supper in the Refectory at S. Croce and a Madonna and Saints in the church of S. Felicità may yet be seen.¹ If, however, the beautiful frescoes in the Rinuccini Chapel in S. Croce² are, as Vasari asserts, really by Taddeo, they must be regarded as his *chefs d'œuvres*, and he must have painted them about this time.³

THE GIOTTESCHI

Showing the Giottesque succession from Giotto to Masaccio through the Tuscan School.



Two of Taddeo's pupils, Giacomo da Casentino and Giovanni da Milano, were at work during this period.

¹ His perished works are enumerated in Crowe and Cav., i. 368.

² They are described in Lindsay, vol. ii. p. 74.

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle (vol. i. p. 406) attribute them to Giovanni da Milano, but their judgment is based entirely on style.

GIACOMO DA CASENTINO was the progenitor of an inferior branch of the Florentine Giotteschi that ended with Parri Spinelli and Bicci.¹ He is, however, deserving of mention as the master of Spinello Aretino and as the founder of the Guild of S. Luke. There are two of his pictures in the Uffizi,² besides which hardly any of his work in Florence remains.³

GIOVANNI DA MILANO was an artist of much more ability, and his style exemplifies a phase of the development of the Giottesque manner in Florence, for both in feeling and colour his works are tinged with a Sieneese influence.⁴ A Deposition that he painted, in 1365, for the convent of S. Girolamo sulla Costa is now in the *Accademia* at Florence. Another and more important work, representing the Madonna enthroned, which was probably executed about the same time, is in the Municipal Gallery at Prato, and some fragments of a picture, which was once in the church of the Ognissanti, are now in the Uffizi. There is also a fresco of a Madonna and Saints in the cloister of the church of the Carmine, which is his work.

AGNOLO GADDI, who after the death of his father Taddeo became a pupil of Giovanni da Milano, was "undisputed prince of painting in Florence during the latter years of the third quarter of the century."⁵ In 1367 he was, as has been mentioned, supplying designs for sculpture for the Loggia de' Lanzi, and it was probably about the same time that he executed the frescoes in the Capella della Sacra Cintola at Prato, which are the most important of his early works.⁶ Vasari's statement that he restored the mosaics in the Baptistery in 1346 must surely be erroneous, seeing that he was then but twenty years old. It is far more probable that this was the work of Taddeo.

But interesting as the Florentine Giotteschi are in the history of Art, the most prominent figure of the period must be looked for outside their ranks. By far the greatest of the artists then

¹ Crowe and Cav., ii. 2; Lindsay, ii. 103.

² A Coronation of the Virgin and Episodes in the life of S. Peter.

³ An Ascension of S. John by him is in the National Gallery, London.

⁴ Crowe and Cav., i. 402, 403.

⁵ Lindsay, ii. 83. Much difference of opinion exists as to Agnolo's merits. Vasari says that he worked capriciously (vol. i. 231). Lord Lindsay considers his easel-pictures mediocre and feeble, and that his career was one of continual decadence (vol. ii. pp. 83, 84), while Crowe and Cavalcaselle hold that he surpassed his father, and in one of his works rivalled the simplicity of Giotto (vol. ii. p. 467).

⁶ Crowe and Cav., i. 465-467, where they are described.

living was ORCAGNA. The dates of his birth and death are alike uncertain, but the latter event must have occurred between 1367, when he was commissioned to paint a picture for the church of Or San Michele, and 1376, when an instrument was executed by "his widow."¹ The name of "Orcagna" is said to be a corruption of *Arcagnolo* (Archangel). Hence Ruskin writes of him: "An intense solemnity and energy in the sublimest groups of his figures, fading away as he touches inferior subjects, indicates that his home was among the archangels, and his rank among the first of the sons of men."²

In days when universality of genius was not uncommon, Orcagna was gifted beyond his most versatile contemporaries. He was not only, after Giotto's death, the first architect, sculptor, and painter living, but he was a mosaicist,³ goldsmith, and poet of no mean order. It is said that he studied the goldsmith's craft under his father, painting under his brother Bernardo, and sculpture under Andrea Pisano.⁴ Not many of his paintings exist,⁵ but judging from those that survive it may be asserted that had he lived at a time when perspective and drawing the nude were better understood, he would have been numbered among the greatest painters that Italy ever produced.⁶ The place that he occupies among the pre-Renaissance artists is peculiar. He cannot be classed among the Giotteschi, for although Giotto's influence pervades his works, so does that of the Semi-Byzantines.⁷ He forms a link between the Florentine and Sienese Schools, for his style combines the dignity and dramatic force of the one with the tenderness and devotional fervour of the other.⁸ The magnificent frescoes of the *Dies Iræ*, of Paradise, and of Hell in the Strozzi Chapel in S. Maria

¹ Perkins, ii. 233; Crowe and Cav., i. 444. Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcasse say (vol. i., p. 440) that Orcagna joined the guild of painters in 1369, but I can find no such statement in Baldinucci, whom they give as their authority. Vasari states that Orcagna died, aged sixty, in 1389. As the year of his death given by Vasari is obviously wrong, his statement as to the age cannot be relied upon.

² *Modern Painters* (1888), iii. 29.

³ He worked at the mosaics in Orvieto Cathedral in 1360.

⁴ Perkins, i. 77; Crowe and Cav., i. 429.

⁵ His frescoes on the façade of S'Apollinare, in S. Croce, S. Agostino, the lady-chapel of S. Maria Novella, and in the Annunziata have all perished. Those in the choir of S. Maria Novella, when decaying, were painted over by Ghirlandajo (Vasari, i. 205, 209; Lindsay, ii. 216).

⁶ Crowe and Cav., i. 428; Cook's *Handbook to the National Gallery* (1893), p. 420.

⁷ Lindsay, ii. 207.

⁸ Lindsay, ii. 208; Crowe and Cav., i. 429.

Novella are the most important of his paintings to be seen in Florence.¹ They were probably executed before 1354, or at any rate before 1357.² On the first pillar in the north aisle of the cathedral is a fresco of his, representing S. Zenobio between SS. Cresenzio and Eugenio. An altar-piece that he painted for the church of S. Pietro Maggiore is now in the National Gallery, London.

Eminent, however, as Orcagna was as a painter, it is on one of his sculptured works that his fame chiefly rests. In 1349 the captains of the Company of Or San Michele found themselves, as has been already mentioned, in possession of a large sum of money which they could not employ for the object for which it had been given to them. They consequently resolved to expend a portion of it on the erection of a shrine for the picture of the Madonna,³ in whose honour the money had been contributed, which should exceed all other shrines in magnificence.⁴ The execution of this work was entrusted to Orcagna, who completed it after ten years of labour in 1359, having sculptured all the figures and bas-reliefs with his own hand. It consists of a Gothic tabernacle built of marble, enriched with every kind of ornament—statuettes, mosaics, intaglios, enamels, pietra dura work—and storied with bas-reliefs illustrative of the life of the Madonna from her birth to her death. Every detail is in itself a complete work of art, and yet every detail is subordinate to the beauty of the whole. It is a miracle of loveliness, and it perhaps embodies more of the spirit of mediæval Christian Art than any work that has ever been produced.⁵ It cost 86,000 golden florins, and few people will hesitate in agreeing with Vasari that this money could not have been better spent.⁶

It only remains to notice Orcagna's architectural achievements. Among these must be ranked the tabernacle of Or San Michele,

¹ Described in Lindsay, ii. 216, and Crowe and Cav., i. 431. Crowe and Cavalcaselle dispute Vasari's statement that Orcagna was assisted by his brother Bernardo in the execution of these works.

² The altar-piece in the same chapel, which is also by Orcagna, is dated 1357. The celebrated fresco of the "Triumph of Death" in the Campo Santo at Pisa has until recently been ascribed to Orcagna (Lindsay, ii. 210; Crowe, i. 444).

³ This picture is usually attributed to Ugolino da Siena. Probably Ugolino's work perished in 1304, and was replaced by the work of a fourteenth-century master (Crowe and Cav., ii. 55).

⁴ Lindsay, i. 376.

⁵ Perkins, i. 80.

⁶ Lindsay, i. 378.

which no sculptor who was not also an architect could have produced. While he was engaged on this tabernacle he made a model for the pillars of S. Maria del Fiore, which was accepted in 1357.¹ But the work on which his claim to be one of the world's great architects mainly rests is the Loggia de' Lanzi.² This building with its soaring arches and slender columns—as graceful as they are majestic—is not surpassed in beauty by any portico in Italy. For centuries it has been associated with Orcagna's name, but comparatively recently an attempt has been made to show that its architect was his namesake (if not his relative) Bencio di Cione. There can be no doubt that the erection of the Loggia was not commenced until after Orcagna's death, but there can be equally no doubt that plans for it had been prepared during his lifetime. No new fact has been adduced incompatible with the theory that it was built from Orcagna's design.³ Not only is this theory supported by

¹ Crowe, i. 430. Whether or not he designed the Certosa, near Florence, is uncertain (Perkins, i. 82).

² It stands (as everyone knows) in the Piazza della Signoria. It was built as a place of assembly for the discussion of political or commercial matters in rainy weather, instead of on the uncovered *ringhiera* before the Palazzo. It was first called the *Loggia de' Priori*, but its name was changed when the *lanzi* (or lands knechts) that formed the bodyguard of Duke Cosimo were placed there (Perkins, i. 81).

³ The Bencio di Cione hypothesis was originated by Passerini, and adopted by Milanesi, Perkins, and Crowe and Cavalcaselle. It is therefore entitled to respect. It runs, in substance, as follows: Orcagna died in 1368, because it is known that he was very ill on August 25th in that year, and there is no mention of him afterwards. The Loggia was commenced on September 22nd, 1376, on a site which had not been purchased till January 24th, 1374 (six years after Orcagna's death), and it is difficult to see how plans could have been prepared before that date. The work was entrusted to the Opera del Duomo, who always employed their own architect, and their architect at this time was Bencio di Cione (a member of a Lombard family, and not Orcagna's brother as was at one time supposed)—a man of some professional reputation. It is certain therefore that Bencio superintended the erection of the Loggia. The ascription of the design to Orcagna has arisen from a confusion between Andrea di Cione and Bencio di Cione.

Those who put forward this theory have quite overlooked the entries that Baldinucci discovered in the *Libro di Ricordanza del Provvedore* of payments made in 1367 to Jacopo di Piero for sculpturing four Theological Virtues for the Loggia de' Priori, to Giovanni Fetti for a Fortezza and a Temperantia, and to Agnolo Gaddi for designs for figures for the same building. It is therefore certain that the plans for the Loggia were in existence before Orcagna died, or the decorations could not have been executed. It is also certain that it was determined to build a Loggia near the Palazzo in 1354, and having regard to the contemporary entries of payments for decorations it may reasonably be inferred that the site was fixed upon at that time.

This disposes of the main ground on which the Bencio theory rests (Perkins, ii. 233; Crowe and Cav., i. 454; Baldinucci's *Notizie de' Professori del Disegno* (1681), p. 74; Reumont's *Tavole, sub anno* (1354)).

tradition, but it is *a priori* probable that the design for a building of such transcendent merit should have sprung from the brain of the greatest genius of the age.

In 1349 the *ringhiera*, *i.e.* the raised stone platform outside the Palazzo Vecchio, was completed.¹ In October, 1359, a plan for a new façade for S. Maria del Fiore was made public. It was the joint production of a committee of architects consisting of Neri di Fioravante, Benci Cione, Francesco Salvetti, Orcagna, Taddeo Gaddi, and Niccolo Tommasi, who had been long deliberating over it.² Whether this was an original design or an elaboration of a plan which, according to tradition, Giotto had prepared, it is impossible even to guess.

ALBERTO ARNOLDI, a pupil of Andrea Pisano's, sculptured, in 1349, a life-size statue of the Madonna, which now stands on the altar of the Bigallo Chapel at Florence. Although without beauty it has a certain grandeur from its impassiveness.³ Arnoldi subsequently worked upon the façade of Florence Cathedral.

LITERATURE

When we turn from Art to Literature the first fact to be noticed is Laura's death, which occurred on April 6th, 1348, and which produced a marked change in PETRARCH's compositions. The Odes written *In morte di Madonna Laura* are graver and of more religious tone, and his prose works treat of more serious subjects. It was about this time that the princely houses of Northern Italy—the house of Gonzaga at Mantua, of Carrara at Padua, of Este at Ferrara, of Malatesta at Rimini, of Visconti at Milan—entertained Petrarch, and vied with each other in doing him honour. Indeed "the tendency to honour men of letters and to patronise the arts which distinguished Italian princes throughout the Renaissance period first manifested itself in the attitude of the Visconti and Carresi to Petrarch."⁴

He made a pilgrimage to Rome in 1350, and passed through Florence both going and returning. It was then that his lasting friendship with Boccaccio was first formed. In the following year Boccaccio was sent by the Signory of Florence to invite

¹ It was destroyed in 1812 (Horner, i. 232). A *ringhiera* is mentioned by Villani as existing in 1312. A representation of it may be seen in a fresco in the great cloister at S. Maria Novella by Balducci, and in a picture of Savonarola's martyrdom in the convent of S. Marco.

² Crowe and Cav., iii. 185, note.

³ Perkins, ii. 71.

⁴ J. A. Symonds, *Ency. Brit.*, xviii. 708.

Petrarch to accept the rectorship of their recently refounded University. But although the invitation was accompanied with a promise of restoration of civil rights and of restitution of patrimony, it was declined. In 1353 he began an autobiography, known as the *Epistle to Posterity*, which he never finished. The remaining years of his life were devoted to the furtherance of humanistic studies. He engaged in a lengthy controversy with the Averroists whom he regarded as dangerous foes to religion and culture, and this dispute gave rise to his work *Upon my own Ignorance and that of many others*. One of his last compositions was a Latin version of Boccaccio's story of Griselda.

In 1368 Petrarch was present at the marriage of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, with Violanti Visconti, where he was treated as one of the most honoured guests. It was then, or soon afterwards, that he met Chaucer, if indeed such meeting ever occurred.¹ He died at Arquà, a village in the Euganean hills, on July 18th, 1374.²

In 1350 BOCCACCIO returned from Naples to Florence, where he was received with great distinction. It was then that he first met Petrarch, and from that time for more than twenty years the attitude of the younger towards the older poet was that of a humble pupil; and the influence that Boccaccio so gladly imbibed from his teacher was manifested in his works and thence transmitted, through a succession of Florentine scholars, until it appeared a century later in the Platonic Academy of the Medici.

His great masterpiece, the Decameron, which appeared in 1353, has been already noticed. In 1355 he wrote a coarse satire called *Il Corbaccio*, on a lady who had either refused his advances or jilted him. He seems, however, at this period of his life, to have devoted more time to study than composition. He learnt Greek from Leontius Pilatus, and though his scholarship was superficial, he acquired so much more mastery over the language than had been previously attained in Italy, that he deserves to be called the first Grecian of the modern world.³ Through his instrumentality Leontius Pilatus was appointed Professor of Greek in the University of Florence. His industry as a student was indefatigable. He copied with his own hand the whole of Terence and of the *Divina Commedia*. Between 1363 and 1373 he resided chiefly at Florence or Certaldo, during which period he wrote four important Latin works, the chief

¹ Garnett, p. 60. ² *Ency. Brit.*, xviii. 709. ³ Symonds, ii. 91.

of which is the *De Genealogia Deorum*. The last two books of this work form a defence of poetry, and the arguments they contain, long after the author's death, supplied the champions of culture with weapons which they used against their ecclesiastical antagonists.¹ To the same period must be assigned *Il Ninfale Fiesolano*, a beautiful love-story in verse, which is one of the most attractive of his minor writings.²

In 1373 the Florentines established a chair for the promotion of the study of Dante at their University, and Boccaccio was its first occupant. No more fitting appointment could have been made, for no one living had a more unstinted admiration for Dante³ or a more thorough knowledge of his works.⁴

Boccaccio died at Certalda on December 21st, 1375, just seventeen months after the death of Petrarch and fifty-four years after that of Dante. "That one city should have produced three such men, and that one half-century should have witnessed their successive triumphs⁵ forms the great glory of Florence, and is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of genius."⁶

Symonds remarks, in a passage of much beauty, that with the death of Petrarch, Orcagna, and Boccaccio "the genius of mediæval Florence sank to sleep."⁷ It is of course impossible, where change is gradual, to fix the precise moment when the old order gives place to the new. Still it seems that Symonds has here sacrificed accuracy to rhetoric. The "sleep" of which he is speaking began, as was only natural, earlier in the world of Letters than in that of Art. It had already commenced in the one and it had not commenced in the other. The dawn of the new spirit is more clearly discernible in the works of Petrarch than the twilight of the old, while in those of Boccaccio rays of the Renaissance day are streaming over the horizon. And in painting, if indeed the sun of mediævalism set with Orcagna, there was a brilliant and deceptive after-glow during the life of Fra Angelico.

After Giovanni Villani's death in 1348 his brother Matteo

¹ *Ibid.*, 79.

² Garnett, p. 92.

³ In this respect Boccaccio contrasts favourably with Petrarch who (perhaps from a consciousness of inferiority that irritated a nature essentially vain) gave but a grudging admiration to Dante.

⁴ Nevertheless he had not the elevation of mind really to comprehend Dante (Symonds, iv. 102).

⁵ The *Divina Commedia* was written between 1314 and 1321. Most of Petrarch's sonnets between 1337 and 1341, and the Decameron appeared in 1353.

⁶ Symonds, iv. 128.

⁷ *Ibid.*, iv. 137.

Villani continued the chronicles of Florence until 1363, when he was carried off by the same outbreak of the plague as ended the days of Piero Farnesi. Matteo, like Giovanni, was a genuine Guelph, but his independent criticisms of his party chiefs drew down on him an admonition, and during the last three months of his life he was debarred from taking part in public affairs. His work, as a local history, is hardly so valuable as his brother's, more space being devoted to what was taking place in other countries; but it is one of considerable merit. After his death his son Filippo Villani completed Book XI., on which his father was engaged, thus bringing the great work which Giovanni had commenced down to 1364. Filippo's continuation is well written, but its historical value is not great. His *Lives of Illustrious Florentines* is a more important work.

In 1349, as soon as Florence was beginning to recover from the effects of the plague, she refounded her University and endowed it with an income of 2,500 florins. Although she is rightly looked upon as the centre of Italian culture, she seems to have been behind the rest of Italy in the matter of State-aided education.¹ It is true that she had a University, at which attendance was compulsory, as early as 1321,² but it had no reputation beyond her walls, and it must have been in a state of decadence before the outbreak of the plague. Nor was it a success after 1349, for it had to be again refounded in 1357. Possibly the scarcity and dearness of lodgings was the chief cause of its failure. But, however this may be, it is certain that other Universities continued to seduce its best lecturers from their posts.³

Although Florence University, as compared with others in Europe, held but a second-class position, it deserves special praise for being the first in Italy at which either a professor of Greek or a professor of Poetry was established. The former was instituted in 1360, the latter in 1373.

The Florentine University played a smaller part in the humanistic movement than might have been expected, and at the moment when Florence was most conspicuous as the teacher of Italian culture it ceased to exist.⁴ Its most brilliant period was during the first decade of the fifteenth century.⁵

¹ There were salaried teachers of law throughout Northern Italy in the thirteenth century (Rashdall's *Universities of Europe during the Middle Ages*, ii. 46-50). ² Burckhardt's *Renaissance in Italy*, p. 211, note 1.

³ Rashdall, ii. 46-50. ⁴ Rashdall, ii. 50. ⁵ Burckhardt, 212.

CHAPTER IX

1374-1382

WAR WITH THE CHURCH—THE EIGHT SAINTS—THE RISING OF
THE CIOMPI

FLORENCE now became involved in an important war, which although it brought her no profit, brought her much credit, as well as a three years' respite from the tyranny of the *Parte Guelfa*. In 1374 peace between the lords of Milan and the Church was concluded, and the bands of the *condottieri*, who had been in the papal service, were in the vicinity of Bologna without occupation.¹ The proximity of these unpleasant neighbours occasioned Florence some uneasiness, and her troubles were increased by a great scarcity of corn. The harvest in the Bolognese district had been abundant, so the Signory applied to the Pope's legate for a supply of grain. Albornoz was dead, and the conduct of the Pope's temporal affairs in Italy was in the hands of Cardinal Guillaume de Noellet, who entertained no friendly feelings towards Florence. But as there was still an alliance between Florence and the Church, she naturally anticipated that her request would be granted, and great was her surprise when it was peremptorily refused. The Cardinal was in fact at this very time scheming for the annexation of Florence to the papal states, and this was the first move in the game which he was playing. His next move, in 1375, was to give secret instructions to Hawkwood to enter the Florentine territory and, as if acting on his own account, to destroy the crops and to seize Prato. But Hawkwood disliked Noellet, and entered into an agreement with the Signory, under which he undertook, in consideration of 130,000 florins down and a salary of 1,200 florins during his stay in Italy,

¹ These comprised Hawkwood's company and the ferocious Bretons that had been employed in reducing the papal states to obedience.

not to¹ molest Florentine territory for five years. The Cardinal disavowed all knowledge of Hawkwood's proceedings, and sent him a formal discharge from the Pope's service, followed by a secret intimation that it was not to be acted on, but Hawkwood, preferring the friendship of Florence to that of the Church, acted on the fictitious dismissal.²

The news of these transactions occasioned very general indignation, and it was felt that war was inevitable. The Florentines, with characteristic promptitude, entered into an immediate alliance with Bernabò Visconti, and on August 8th they appointed a board of eight (*Gli Otto della Guerra*) to superintend the conduct of the war. The citizens who were selected for this office were Alessandro de' Bardi, Giovanni Dini, Giovanni Magalotti, Andrea Salviati, Tommaso Strozzi, Guiccio Guicci, Matteo Soldi, and Giovanni di Mone.³ They acted with so much judgment and resolution, and displayed such integrity and general ability that they subsequently earned for themselves the title of "*Gli Otto Santi*" (The Eight Saints).

Although the action of the Signory was opposed by a large majority of citizens, there was a small but powerful minority to whom it was highly distasteful. This was the first time that Florence had ever crossed swords with the Church, and those whose religious zeal or Guelph sympathies overpowered their patriotism denounced the war as sacrilegious. To this party belonged the Albizzi and their adherents, but, powerful as they were, the tide of popular feeling for some time ran too high for their voice to be heard. The measures occasioned by the coming war had a remarkable and at first very beneficial effect on domestic affairs in Florence. As it was well known that the Abbizzi belonged to the peace party, not one of the Eight of War was taken from their faction. Hence a legally constituted body was created altogether out of sympathy with the system of admonitions, which stood so high in public estimation that for a while the great captains of the *Parte Guelfa* were in awe of it.

¹ Hawkwood knew that the Florentines were better paymasters than the Pope, who owed him large sums for pay.

² Gino Capponi, i. 321; Napier, ii. 378. Perrens discredits the whole story of Noellet's refusal to supply grain, and of his subsequent double-dealing, but his reasoning is not conclusive. He alleges that the war was provoked by "un grief imaginaire" (vol. v. p. 101).

³ Ammirato, iv. 57. One of them was a noble, one belonged to the *Arti Minori*, and six to the *Arti Maggiori* (Gino Capponi, i. 323).

The Eight lost no time in entering into treaties with Siena, Lucca, Cortona, and Arezzo. In the following January Pisa joined the league, and Bologna was ultimately induced to throw in her lot with the anti-papal party. Conrad of Swabia was appointed commander-in-chief, and measures were taken for the defence of Florentine territory. But the energies of the Eight were not confined to military operations. A heavy tax was imposed on ecclesiastical property, and by the aid of Florentine gold and Florentine intrigue the temporal power of the Church, which had been so recently re-established by Alborno, was undermined. In an incredibly short time¹ no less than eighty walled towns, including the important cities of Perugia, Viterbo, Orvieto, Città di Castello, and Urbino had thrown off the papal yoke and regained their freedom.² Some of these volunteered to become dependencies of Florence, but the Eight, from prudence if not from generosity, declined their submission. A banner inscribed with the single word "Liberty," in white letters on a red field, was sent to all cities of the League.³ No Florentine was allowed to accept the bishopric of either Florence or Fiesole, and ecclesiastics were forbidden to carry arms.

For a bloodless warfare of this description Pope Gregory XI. was better equipped than his opponents. Not content with excommunicating the priors and other state officials, he directed the sovereigns of Catholic kingdoms to expel all Florentine merchants and to despoil them of their goods.⁴ An incalculable pecuniary loss, both public and private, was thus inflicted on Florence.

But as the struggle was not to be settled with weapons of this sort, the Pope enlisted in his service another band of ferocious Breton mercenaries under Jean de Malestroit and Silvester of Buda. When Malestroit was asked if he could make his way into Florence he replied, "Yes, if the sun can do so."⁵ But before ordering his Breton troop to march southwards the Pope offered peace to Florence if she would cease tempting Bologna

¹ In ten days the Church had lost forty-eight towns or castles (Perrens, v. 116).

² Gregory XI. had set up French governors over many of his states, and their rule was very galling (Creighton, i. 56).

³ Gino Capponi, i. 326.

⁴ Gino Capponi, i. 328; Napier, ii. 381. They were hunted from England, France, Germany, Hungary, and Naples. Pisa and Venice (who always treated the Church with haughty indifference) alone disregarded the mandate.

⁵ Ricotti, ii. 160.

to throw off her allegiance to the Papal See. The Eight were severely blamed by many for refusing this offer. The *Parte Guelfa*, the clerical faction, and the evicted merchants all alike cried out for a cessation of hostilities. But "the Saints" felt that Florence could not honourably recede from the position that she had taken up. She had constituted herself the leader of an almost national movement against the temporal aggrandisement of the Church, and by her action a large number of cities were in danger of ecclesiastical chastisement. In spite of the efforts of the Eight, the peace party in Florence might have carried the day had not the Pope cited the Signory to appear before him at Avignon, and had not his mercenaries, without provocation, sacked Faenza.¹ The former event produced irritation and the latter indignation, which increased the desire of the Florentines to humble the Pope.

In reply to the summons to Avignon the Signory sent three lawyers, of whom Donato Barbadori was the chief spokesman. Barbadori defended the conduct of his native city with courage and eloquence in a speech which, it is said, drew tears from the eyes of the Italian cardinals. But the decision was a foregone conclusion. Florentines were excommunicated, and their city laid under an interdict. When Barbadori heard the judgment of the court he flung himself on his knees before a crucifix, and with real or well-feigned emotion exclaimed, in a voice heard by all present, "To Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, from this unholy sentence pronounced by Thy Vicar, permit me to appeal in that tremendous day wherein Thou shalt appear to judge the world without distinction of persons."²

The spirited reply of Florence to the interdict was an edict making it a capital offence to molest any individual under the authority of the papal anathema. But the peace party were not inactive, and in order to allay agitation the Eight consented to open negotiations for peace, surmising (correctly, as the event proved) that nothing would come of them. The war was now resumed with redoubled vigour. The Eight were continued in office for another six months, and were, with much ceremony, presented with silver urns as a mark of public favour. On the part of the Church hostilities were carried on under the direction

¹ This was perpetrated by Hawkwood's troops because their pay was in arrear. They contented themselves with pillage, and spared life (Ammirato, iv. 72).

² Ammirato, iv. 62.

of Robert, Cardinal of Geneva,¹ with a savagery worthy of Werner or Fra Moriale. The massacres of the inhabitants of Monte San Giorgio and Cesena by the papal mercenaries sent a thrill of horror all through Italy.²

Shortly afterwards Hawkwood (it is to be hoped from disgust at the part which he had been compelled to play) left the papal service and entered that of the allies.³ The Eight also freed Florentine territory from the presence of the Breton troop whose two captains they bribed to depart. In order to raise funds for carrying on the war, the Signory directed the sale of ecclesiastical property to the value of 100,000 florins, and endeavoured to persuade Rome, to which city Pope Gregory was about to return, to join the League.⁴ More futile negotiations for peace took place, in the course of which the papal ambassadors endeavoured to stir up the people of Florence against the government, and more especially against the Eight, whose dismissal from office they demanded. The Pope increased the severity of the interdict laid on Florence, whereupon she publicly set it at defiance. The places of worship that had hitherto been closed were reopened, and the priests were compelled to perform every religious ceremony.

But Italy was getting tired of the war. In August, 1377, Bologna returned to the allegiance of the Church, and it was evident that the military ardour of other members of the League was cooling. So the Eight (whose term of office had, against their will, been

¹ He was afterwards the anti-pope Clement VII.

² A Bolognese chronicler, writing of these massacres, says: "People no longer believe either in the Pope or Cardinals, for these are things to crush one's faith." Between 2,500 and 5,000 Cesenesi were slaughtered by the English and Breton companies. Hawkwood had expressed repugnance at his instructions, which were "Blood and more Blood," but he consented to be one of the Cardinal's executioners. The robber chief was, however, less cruel than the priest, and, in disobedience of orders, he sent 1,000 women to Rimini and connived at the escape of other inhabitants (Ammirato, iv. 72; Temple-Leader's *Sir John Hawkwood*, pp. 121, 122).

³ His troop consisted of 800 lancers and 500 archers (2,900 men in all) and he received from the allies 25,200 florins a month (Temple-Leader's *Sir John Hawkwood*, p. 124).

⁴ Rome at this time had a free government consisting of thirteen "bannerets" with which she was contented, but she nevertheless desired the return of the papacy. If she had now joined the League, the Papal States would in all probability have been swept away (Creighton, i. 56). The appeal to Rome by Florence was written by the celebrated Coluccio Salutati, who warned the Romans that they would lose their liberty on the Pope's return. But they paid no heed to the warning and gave the Pope a joyful reception in January, 1377 (Napier, ii. 402).

once more prolonged) deemed it expedient, early in 1378, to open *bonâ fide* negotiations for peace. Florence narrowly missed being mulcted of 800,000 florins through the treachery of her ally Bernabò Visconti, who had been entrusted with the settlement of the terms of a treaty between the Pope and the League.¹ Fortunately for her, before Bernabò's award took effect Gregory XI. died. His successor, Urban VI., was an Italian who was well disposed towards Florence, and who was anxious to put an end to a troublesome war. Consequently three months after his election peace was concluded, and a treaty was signed at Tivoli on July 28th, under which Florence undertook to pay to the Pope 200,000 florins,² to repeal all laws against the Church, and to restore all property that had been taken from ecclesiastics; in return for which the Pope graciously undertook to remove the interdict and to restore Florence to ecclesiastical favour. This was all that Florence gained by a three years' war which had cost her 2,500,000 florins, and in which success in the field had more often attended her forces than those of her opponents. She had, however, good reason to be proud of the part that she had played, for it contributed to the removal of the papal court from Avignon and to the ending of the domination of Italy by French cardinals.³

The election of Urban VI. was a momentous event in the history of the Church, as it occasioned the Great Schism which not only disturbed Italy for forty years, but influenced religion and politics in Europe for a much longer period. The cardinals expected, when they elected Urban in April, 1378, that they had chosen a pope who would be a mere figure-head; but he had not been in office for many weeks before they found that they were mistaken. His behaviour was unseemly and his conduct so insufferably overbearing, that in July a considerable number of cardinals agreed to impugn the validity of his election, and in September they met at Fondi, where they elected as Pope the notorious Robert of Geneva, who assumed the title of Clement VII.⁴ Henceforth until the Council of Constance,

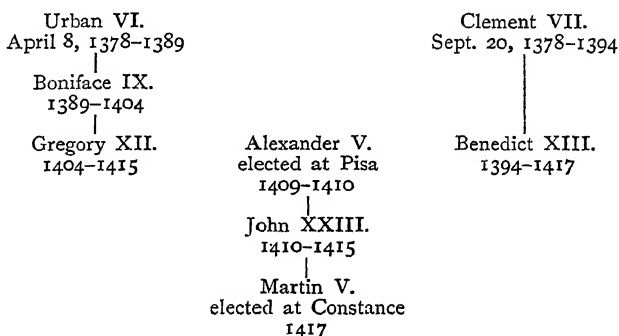
¹ Bernabò had secretly agreed with the Pope, before he commenced the arbitration, as to the indemnity that Florence should pay, and stipulated that a share of it should be paid over to him (Napier, ii. 405).

² Or perhaps 150,000 (Gino Capponi, i. 340).

³ The action of Florence in this matter indirectly occasioned the Great Schism, and so expedited the Reformation.

⁴ "He had no tact, no sense of dignity or decorum" (Creighton, i. 67).

there were two, and sometimes three, popes claiming to be the rightful occupant of S. Peter's chair.



Although the Schism was provoked by Urban's want of dignity and discretion, it would have been avoided, or at least short-lived, but for the conflicting claims of Rome and Avignon to be the papal domicile. This it was which made Italy acknowledge the pope and France the anti-pope.¹

The foreign policy which Florence had been pursuing since 1374 had an important bearing on her home affairs. The authority exercised by the "Eight Saints" was, as has been seen, gall and wormwood to the Captains of the *Parte Guelfa* who, although constrained to act with more circumspection than heretofore, were all the while husbanding their strength. They still contrived that no one outside a very few Guelph families should be one of their Captains, and they evaded by dishonest devices every law that had been passed in restraint of their power. By such means the members of the council of Twenty-four were confined to their own immediate friends. When those who were to serve on this body were being ballotted for, if the name of an individual whose allegiance they doubted was drawn, one of them rose and said that "he had seen that citizen leave Florence that very morning for his country residence," and the name was thereupon replaced in the election bag. Under similar false prettexts the election of every opponent was cancelled.²

¹ England, Germany, and Hungary recognised the pope, and Naples, Scotland, and Savoy, the anti-pope. Spain remained neutral till 1394, when she supported the anti-pope.

² Ammirato, iv. 80.

Although the arrogance of the Captains was inordinate they were abjectly courted by all classes. As they walked along the streets the people stood bareheaded or bowed to them as if they were princes. Matrimonial alliances with their daughters, even when portionless, were solicited by powerful families. "No tyrant, after the discovery of a conspiracy, was ever so formidable to his subjects as the Captains were to the Florentines."¹ Yet while they were openly treated with servility they were secretly detested, and many a citizen was anxiously waiting for an opportunity of avenging slights or injuries which he or his family had received. But the old party names, senseless as they now were, were not powerless. "Guelph" was a magic word with which the Captains were still able to conjure, for it was not as yet generally realised that the very principles which had made Ghibellism noxious were now embodied in the policy of the *Parte Guelfa*. The eyes of many were, however, opened in 1375, when an admonition was launched against Giorgio degli Scali, a member of an ancient Guelph family, who, until the previous year, had acted with "the Party."² People began to exclaim, "If Giorgio is admonished who can hope to escape? The *Ammonizione* was intended for Ghibellines, not Guelphs."³ At the close of the war it was evident that mischief was hatching. The chiefs of "the Party" were Piero degli Albizzi, Lapo da Castiglionchio, Niccolò Soderini, Bartolo Siminetti, and Carlo Strozzi. The opposition comprised the Eight Saints, the Medici (of whom Salvestro was the most prominent), the Alberti, Ricci, and Giorgio Scali.

Piero degli Albizzi and his friends had, during the war, done something towards sapping the authority of the Eight Saints, but they had not as yet dared to strike them openly. They had found a valuable ally in Catherine of Siena, who had been sent to Florence by Pope Gregory to preach peace. They persuaded her that the Eight were aiming at establishing themselves as permanent governors of the State, and that "they deserved not to be called rulers, but destroyers of the Commonwealth."⁴ So, at their instigation, she preached not only against the continuance

Ammirato, iv. 80.

Giorgio henceforth became one of the bitterest and most powerful foes of the Party.

³ M. di Coppo Stefani (1781), vol. xiv. 133.

⁴ Chronicles of Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, cited by Josephine Butler in her *Catherine of Siena*, p. 206. There is not a shred of evidence to show that the conduct of the Eight Saints was otherwise than disinterested.

of the war, but in favour of the system of admonitions. Her fervid eloquence was not without effect. In her eyes any opposition to the authority of the Church was sinful, and consequently the war now being waged was unholy. She advocated her cause with sincerity and singleness of purpose, and it cannot be doubted that for a time she was unconscious that she was but a tool in the hands of men who at heart cared nothing for religion.¹ But her intervention increased the *odium theologicum* that already existed and further embittered party strife.

Sixty-six persons were admonished between March, 1377, and March, 1378, but no attack was made on the enemy's stronghold. Emboldened, however, by the effect of Catherine's preaching the Captains thought that the time had arrived for more decisive action. In April, 1378, they ventured to admonish Giovanni Dini, who was one of the Saints and a man universally respected.² Ominous murmurs were heard among the people, with whom he was a favourite, but no sign of active resentment showed itself. Had the Captains dared, the blow would have been aimed at Salvestro de' Medici, who was now regarded as the leader of their opponents, and who was becoming more popular every day. He first came into notice when he was instrumental in the discovery of the conspiracy of 1360 in which his brothers were involved, and he grew in public esteem when he was Gonfalonier of Justice, ten years later. His family were now among the first of the *popolani grassi*,³ but no one guessed as yet the greatness that was in store for them.

In April, 1378, it was known by the state of the election bags that in the month following Salvestro would in all probability be drawn for the office of gonfalonier, and the minds of the Captains of the Party were much exercised. To admonish him was deemed too dangerous an expedient, but at Lapo Castiglionchio's suggestion they adopted a device which nearly succeeded. They admonished Maso Funaiuolo, one of the *Buonomini*, who represented the quarter in which Salvestro lived, with the intention that Salvestro or one of his numerous relations should be elected to fill the vacancy thereby created, and that he should thus, by the operation of the law of *Divieto*, be disqualified for

¹ Before she left her eyes were partially opened, and she denounced the use of judicial authority for private ends. Her life was threatened by an armed mob when she was at Vallombrosa (A. T. Drane's *History of S. Catherine of Siena*, ii. 99-101).

² Ammirato, iv. 85.

³ Perrens, v. 192.

the office of gonfalonier. But Salvestro and his friends saw through the trick and contrived to delay the election to the post vacated by Maso until after the election of a gonfalonier had taken place.¹ To this office Salvestro was duly elected on May 1st, and much was hoped and feared from his appointment. His friends "said that he had been born for the safety of the Republic," while the Captains of the Party feared that "he would put an end to their juggling tricks."² The latter, however, thought that it would be wise to endeavour to conciliate him, and they proposed certain concessions. The most important of these were:—

1. That no one should henceforth be admonished unless he were "really a Ghibelline."
2. That the question of admonishing any citizen should not be put to the vote more than three times.
3. That the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* (which had fallen into abeyance) should be enforced.

The first of these proposals was an unblushing admission that the Board had abused its powers.

Salvestro thought it prudent to accept the proposed terms, and peace between the two parties would probably have ensued if the Captains had kept faith with him. But only six weeks after this agreement had been entered into, two citizens were admonished after the motion had been rejected by the Board twenty-two times. When this was known, Salvestro, being *Proposto*,³ "a rank which for the time it lasts, is almost equivalent to the sovereignty of the city,"⁴ seized the opportunity of proposing a law for the repression of admonitions, but the priors were timid and his notion was rejected. This he had anticipated and he had, before entering the Signory, summoned an assembly of the people in the Sala del Consiglio. Thither, on the rejection of his proposal, he immediately repaired, and after dwelling with some warmth on the manner in which he had been thwarted in his endeavours to remove abuses, he declared his intention, as he was powerless to benefit the republic, of resigning the office of gonfalonier, and retiring from public life.⁵

¹ Ammirato, iv. 86.

² Ammirato, iv. 86.

³ This office, which was somewhat analogous to that of President of the Signory, carried with it also the right of introducing legislative changes. It only lasted three days.

⁴ Machiavelli, p. 124.

⁵ Ammirato, iv. 91; Machiavelli, p. 124.

Great confusion arose as he left the room. Carlo Strozzi, when he endeavoured to address the meeting, was roughly handled and told that the day of his greatness was over. Benedetto degli Alberti looked out of the window and shouted "*Viva il popolo.*" The cry was taken up by those in the Piazza, the shops were shut, and in a short space of time the city was up in arms. Meanwhile the Signory had prevailed on Salvestro to continue in office, and had passed the Bill against Admonitions which they had previously thrown out. The whole matter had probably been prearranged by Salvestro and his friends, who knew full well that his resignation would never be accepted. It was, no doubt, a meritorious attempt to put an end by a show of violence to an intolerable tyranny, but Salvestro altogether miscalculated the forces which he had called into play.

The supporters of the *Parte Guelfa* also armed, but seeing the strength of their opponents, they retired and no blows were struck. The people then dispersed, but their aspect was sullen and menacing, and it was obvious that a storm was brewing. All articles of value which could be moved were hidden or were stored in convents or churches. This took place on Saturday, June 18th. The whole of Monday the 20th was taken up with conferences between the *Arti* and the Signory, but no agreement was come to. The Salvestro faction became impatient, and on the Tuesday morning (June 21st) the companies of the *Arti* marched into the Piazza della Signoria armed, and with their gonfalons flying. Their mere appearance was enough to fan into a blaze the smouldering fire. There was a general uprising, and the pent-up hatred which the tyranny of the Captains of the Party had engendered, was in a moment unloosed. Before long the palaces of Lapo di Castiglionchio and Bartolo Siminetti, of the Albizzi, Pazzi, Strozzi,¹ and Buondelmonti were in flames and the mob were masters of the entire city. The *Ammoniti* took advantage of the prevailing disorder to wreak their vengeance on those whom they believed responsible for their disfranchisement. The rioters during the morning confined their work of destruction to the houses of those who had rendered themselves specially obnoxious, but by the evening they were pillaging the palaces of the rich indiscriminately, as well as churches and

¹ This was not the well-known palace now standing in Via Tornabuoni, which was built about a hundred years later by a descendant of a distant cousin of Carlo Strozzi.

monasteries. The armed bands of the *Arti*, who were the innocent cause of the riot, were now doing their best to protect property and maintain order.

While this tumult was going on the government created a *Balia* (known as *Gli Ottanta* from the number of its members), which met on Wednesday, June 23rd, and restored the *Ammoniti* to some of their rights of citizenship, repealed the most objectionable statutes that had been passed in the interest of the *Parte Guelfa*, and declared its leaders rebels.¹ When these proceedings became known the storm gradually subsided. On July 1st a new Signory came into office, with Luigi Guicciardini as gonfalonier, and for a short time a show of tranquillity was maintained.

But the concessions granted by the Ottanti were not deemed sufficient. The Guilds presented a petition² for a further restriction and regulation of the *Ammonizione*. Their demands, though exceedingly moderate, were at first refused, and only became law after the Signory had been intimidated by a show of force. The disease, however, was too deep-seated to admit of any such cure. The discontent of the lower orders, who thirsted for a share in the government, was still seething, and the desire of the *Ammoniti* for vengeance was still insatiated.³

The former of these two classes was at the present moment by far the most dangerous, as it had been rendered more discontented by recent disputes between employers and workmen in the *Arti*. By the constitution of the Guilds all questions between masters and men were settled by the Guild Tribunals, which were composed exclusively of the masters, and did not always mete out justice to the men. This grievance was most acutely felt by members of the *Arte della Lana*, which had now become the wealthiest and most important of all the *Arti*. It employed more operatives than any other, and many of these, such as the wool-carders, were taken from the very poorest class.

This seems to have been the chief cause of discontent among the *Ciompi*, but their minds were just now rendered uneasy by the arrival of a certain *Ser Nuto*, from Città di Castello, to fill the revived office of *bargello*, whom they believed had been appointed

¹ This sentence was probably passed on five men who ruled the party. Ammirato (vol. iv. p. 96) says that Lapo da Castiglionchio con Fatti i suoi consorti were proclaimed rebels.

² Perrens, v. 222-223, where the petition is set out.

³ Their emancipation by the *Ammoniti* was only partial. They were still precluded from holding office for three years.

to punish them for the riots in the previous month. A large meeting was accordingly held at Ronco, outside the Porta Romana, when it was arranged that there should be a general rising of the people on July 20th for the purpose of overthrowing the government. Nothing short of this can have been its object, if it is safe to judge from the brilliant speech which Machiavelli has put into the mouth of one of the leaders.

How far Salvestro de' Medici was mixed up in this conspiracy it is difficult to say. It has been suggested that he had been secretly directing it. But there is no direct evidence of this, and it must be remembered that he was a man conspicuous alike for his wealth and his sagacity, and that the ostensible leaders of the movement aimed at nothing short of the establishment of an ochlocracy. It is more probable that he was fostering the popular discontent for the purpose of subverting the Guelph oligarchy, and that he intended, when this was accomplished, to use his immense popularity in curbing the aspirations of the demagogues. It is not surprising, as events showed, that he had over-estimated his powers, for at this time he was followed about the streets by crowds who hailed him as "Liberator of his country." It was said of him by the historian Michele Bruto, "that he was the first of his family who taught his posterity how, by courting the rabble, they would make their way to the lordship and mastery of the republic."¹ It is hard to find any of his acts which warrant this accusation. No doubt "he courted the rabble," and (if the overthrow of a set of tyrants can be so described) "he oppressed noble citizens," but the former was done to effect the latter; nor did he derive benefit from the one or the other. While he persistently, though cautiously, championed the cause of liberty, there is no trace of evidence that he was scheming for family aggrandisement.

On July 19th, the eve of the day fixed for the insurrection, the Signory received private information that disturbances were at hand of which a certain Simoncino, nicknamed *Il Bugigatto*, could give them particulars. He was at once apprehended and, at a meeting of the priors held in the night, he revealed the nature of the conspiracy. Declining to answer certain questions he was put on the rack, when he alleged that the ringleader was no other than Salvestro de' Medici. Two other witnesses were

¹ Napier, i. 415.

then examined under torture, and a confirmation of Simoncino's evidence was extracted from them. Salvestro was immediately summoned to appear before the Signory, and was informed of what he had been accused. He admitted that he had heard something of a plot that was on foot, and he explained that he had not spoken of it because he believed it to be insignificant. He satisfied the Signory that he was in nowise implicated, and they dismissed him with a mild reprimand for not having disclosed what he knew.¹

It chanced that a mechanic, who had access to the tower of the Palazzo for the purpose of regulating the great clock, was in the building when Simoncino was on the rack, and he heard and saw enough to understand what was going on. He was in the secret of the rising, so he lost no time in publishing abroad what he knew, and before morning dawned the whole city was in arms.²

On July 20th the Signory called out the guild-companies, but all except two of them, either from fear, disinclination, or a desire to protect their own property, declined to obey the summons. The two that marched into the Piazza, seeing themselves unsupported, retired, and the mob were left for the whole day in undisputed possession of the city. As a last resource the Signory requested Salvestro to mediate, but the movement for which, in all probability, he more than any other man was responsible, had now passed out of his control. The mob, by burning the house of Luigi Guicciardini, the gonfalonier, effected the release of Simoncino and the two other men who had been tortured with him. "Having recovered the prisoners they took the Standard from the *Esecutore della Giustizia* and, marching under it, they burned the houses of many citizens, and persecuted all whom, either for public or private reasons, they hated. Many of them, in order to avenge private wrongs, conducted the mob to the houses of their enemies, and it went wherever the Standard-Bearer directed, and even if a voice from the crowd cried out 'To the house of such a man' it was obeyed. They burned all the registers and account-books of the *Arte della Lana*, and in order that their many evil deeds should be accompanied by some laudable action they knighted sixty-four citizens,

¹ Ammirato, iv. 101.

² He spread the news with the words *I Priori fan carne* (Gino Capponi's *Tumulto dei Ciompi* (1844), p. 315).

among whom were Salvestro de' Medici, Benedetto degli Alberti, and Tommaso Strozzi."¹ Strangely enough another citizen who had this doubtful honour conferred on him was Luigi Guicciardini, whose house had been burned in the morning. There was no pillage, as there had been in the June riots, and the destruction of property was entirely vindictive. Less violence occurred on the following day (July 21st), but the *podestà's* palace² was attacked and captured, and the leaders of the insurrection made it their headquarters. Negotiations were now opened with the *Arti* and the Signory and, as the insurgents were masters of the situation, neither of these bodies dared to refuse their demands. The representatives of the *Arti* took a solemn oath that they would side with the people, and the Signory granted three petitions that were presented to them.³

It cannot be said that the demands of the people were on the whole extravagant. They required that one fourth of the members of the Eight, the *Buonomini*, the Gonfaloniers of Companies and other bodies should henceforth be taken from the *popolo minuto*, and that members of that class should be eligible for the post of Gonfalonier of Justice.⁴ They also stipulated that three new guilds should be formed out of the wool-carders, dyers, barbers, tailors, shoemakers, and other inferior trades; that the *Ammoniti* should be completely enfranchised, and that all who had taken part in the June riots should be pardoned.⁵ It was officially recorded that Lapo da Castiglionchio and his coterie were "traitors to the *Parte Guelfa*, and the rents of the shops on the Ponte Vecchio (amounting to some 600 florins a year) were to be allotted to Salvestro de' Medici."⁶

The resolutions of the Signory granting the demands were confirmed by the *Consiglio del Popolo* on the following day (July 22nd). The people had got everything for which they had asked, yet they

¹ Machiavelli, pp. 131-132. Only two of the *popolo minuto* were thus honoured (Ammirato, iv. 104).

² Better known as the "Bargello."

³ It was while the July riots were going on that peace with the Pope was concluded.

⁴ The petition containing this demand is set out in extenso by Perrens, vol. v. p. 247.

⁵ According to some accounts there were but two new guilds, but M. di Coppo Stefani gives three (Trollope, ii. 229).

⁶ Some of their demands were not so reasonable, e.g. none of the *popolo minuto* were to be apprehended for debt during the next two years, and no interest was to be paid on the National Debt.

were not satisfied. On the very day on which their requisitions became law Tommaso Strozzi, acting as the spokesman of the Ciompi, entered the hall in which the Signory were sitting and informed them that they were at once to resign in favour of the Eight Saints or they, their wives and children would be burned.¹ Priors and gonfalonier were paralysed with fear and wandered about the palace weeping or wringing their hands and asking of their subordinates what they should do. At length they decided to go to their respective homes "lest a worse thing should come of it to them and to the city."² As soon as the Signory were gone the gates of the palace were thrown open and a mob rushed in, headed by Michele Lando, a wool-carder,³ who was bare-legged, wearing shoes but no stockings. He carried the gonfalon which the people had taken from the house of the *Esecutore di Giustizia*, and proceeding straight to the Council Chamber he stopped, and turning to the people he said, "This palace is now yours, and the city entirely in your hands. What do you mean to do with it?" Immediately the populace by acclamation gave him the lordship of Florence.⁴ They might easily have chosen a worse ruler than this half-clad wool-carder. The picture which Machiavelli has drawn of him⁵ may perhaps be over-coloured, but compared with Giorgio Scali and Tommaso Strozzi he was a paragon of perfection. He was courageous, prudent, and disinterested, and he at once set himself to restore public order. One of his first acts was to issue a proclamation "that no man should burn or steal anything," and he facilitated its enforcement by causing a gallows to be erected in the Piazza. Of this the mob instantly availed themselves to wreak their vengeance on Ser Nuto, the odious new *Bargello*, whom they tied to the gallows by one foot and literary tore to pieces until only the one foot was left.⁶ After this their fury subsided and tranquillity was restored. For twenty-six hours Florence was under the absolute rule of a wool-carder, who, in that brief space of time, framed for the city a new constitution. That this was entirely his work is inconceivable, and it is probable that Salvestro de' Medici had a hand in its construction.

¹ Ammirato, iv. 107. ² Gino Capponi's *Tumulto de' Ciompi*, p. 1122.

³ Or perhaps a foreman of wool-carders.

⁴ Capponi's *Tumulto de' Ciompi*, p. 1125.

⁵ p. 136.

⁶ Machiavelli alleges that Michele instigated the murder of Ser Nuto as a means of diverting the attention of the people, and that he thus saved many lives and much property, but Prof. Villari attributes Ser Nuto's death to an unpremeditated outburst of popular fury (Villari's *Machiavelli*, pp. 410-411).

The new government, which was elected on July 23rd, and came into office on July 24th, consisted of nine priors, three of whom were chosen from the *Arti Maggiori*, three from the *Arti Minori*, and three from the three new *Arti* which had been recently established.¹ Michele was himself appointed Gonfalonier of Justice and Podestà of Empoli. The grant of the shop rents on the Ponte Vecchio to Salvestro was confirmed, and some influential citizens were placed in responsible posts. These transactions gave much dissatisfaction to the *Ciampi*, who began to suspect Lando of aristocratic leanings. Nor did the new constitution meet with their approval, for though thoroughly democratic, it was far other than that which had been dangled before their eyes by the speakers at the Ronco meeting. So towards the end of August they assembled together and elected a rival government, consisting of a "Council of Eight," which held its sittings in the chapel built by Bishop Agnolo Acciaiuoli in the great cloister of S. Maria Novella.² On the day after their election this new body demanded that Salvestro should be deprived of the Ponte Vecchio rents, and that Lando should be deposed from the podestàship of Empoli. These demands, which were backed by the appearance of an armed mob in the Piazza, enraged Lando, and he determined to resist them by force. During the night of August 29th he ordered the companies of the guilds to march into the Piazza on the following morning. They duly obeyed the summons, but at the same time the rabble supporters of the rival government also appeared on the scene. Two of the Eight pushed their way into the palace, and on being ordered to leave by Lando they treated him with great insolence, whereupon he drew his sword, wounded both of them and drove them into the Piazza, where they were arrested by his soldiery. He raised a cry (which rested on little or no foundation) that the Eight of Santa Maria Novella were going to hand over the city to a stranger.³ This turned the tide of opinion in his favour and enabled him to disperse the mob, and when he had partially restored order he resigned the office of gonfalonier.

The new Signory, from which all of the *Ciampi* except Lando

¹ Perrens, v. 265; Trollope, ii. Napier (ii. 429) gives four priors from each group of *Arti*. ² Ammirato, iv. 111; Horner, i. 478.

³ This report gained credence from the presence in Florence of a *condottiere*, Bartolommeo Sanseverino, who was seeking employment (Ammirato, iv. 113).

were excluded, repealed almost all the ordinances which had been passed during the preceding two months, caused the two members of the Eight who had insulted Lando to be beheaded, and banished the remaining six. They invited the sixty-four citizens who had been knighted by the *Ciompi* on July 20th to have their knighthood confirmed by the Commonwealth, and thirty-one availed themselves of the offer, among whom were Salvestro and Vieri de' Medici, Benedetto degli Alberti, Tommaso Strozzi, Giorgio Scali, and one of the Bardi. The two great councils were once more "reformed" with the object, on this occasion, of depriving the lower orders of some of their recently acquired power. But these measures altogether failed to allay disaffection, and the government remained as unstable as heretofore. Within twelve months three conspiracies for its overthrow were discovered, and these were followed by others. Conscious of weakness, the Signory resorted to violence, and mere suspicion of complicity in a plot was enough to entail punishment. Coppo Stefani gives long lists of those who were executed, fined, or banished.¹ Many who suffered capital punishment were probably innocent. Among these was Donato Barbadori, the doctor of law who had so courageously pleaded the cause of Florence before the pope at Avignon. All classes suffered, but class hatred was rampant, and there seems to have been among the *Ciompi* a very thirst for the blood of the *Grandi*. The lower orders exclaimed that the great escaped while the poor were punished, and they denounced both *podestà* and *capitano del popolo* for not executing more of those who had been arrested. Poor old Piero degli Albizzi, whose influence in the past had at one time placed him almost in the position of a sovereign, fell a victim to popular clamour. He had been accused of complicity in a plot and thrown into prison, but the *capitano del popolo*, being satisfied of his innocence, refused to execute him. The mob cried aloud for his blood with such angry demonstrations that the brave old man, acting on the advice of cowardly friends, made a false confession of guilt in order to avert another insurrection.² This fury of the people with the old Guelph leaders was no doubt kindled by the remembrance of bitter wrongs, but it was fanned into flame by two

¹ Vol. ix. p. 78.

² Bartolo Simonetti, another chief of "the Party," was executed at the same time.

unprincipled demagogues—Giorgio Scali and Tommaso Strozzi—who used it to rid themselves of rival aspirants for power. Benedetto degli Alberti for a time worked with them, but his subsequent conduct justifies the belief that he was actuated only by a sincere hatred of Guelph tyranny, and was no party to their machinations.¹ Of the original director of the movement, Salvestro de' Medici, we hear no more, although he did not die till 1388.² Either from age, infirmity, or disapproval of the conduct of his former colleagues, he took no further part in public affairs.

So great was the power of G. Scali, T. Strozzi, and B. degli Alberti that they have been called the Triumvirate,³ and the conduct of the two former was as arbitrary and corrupt as that of the three Guelph leaders⁴ who had earned the same title in 1357. Almost daily they brought forward new accusations against their adversaries of implication in real or imaginary plots, supported often by fabricated evidence. One of the witnesses used by them in this iniquitous business was a certain Jacopo Schiattesi (nicknamed Scatizza), who seems to have played much the same rôle as Titus Oates played in England some three centuries later. This scoundrel's testimony was at length suspected, and he was arrested. The mere sight of the rack drew from him a full confession of the many perjuries that he had committed, and he was sentenced to death.⁵ Whereupon Giorgio Scali and Tommaso Strozzi attacked the house of the *capitano del popolo* and rescued Schiattesi from custody. They had, however, failed to mark that their popularity was a thing of the past. The death of Barbadori had aroused a feeling of resentment among the most respectable citizens, and this had been increased by the execution of others who were equally innocent. It was now apparent to all that they had been posing as the champions of popular rights, not from love of liberty, but from personal ambition. On the day after the rescue, the *capitano del popolo* publicly resigned his office, on the ground that it had become impossible for him any longer to discharge his duty. This demonstration completed the revulsion of popular feeling that had set in some months before. The armed bands of the

¹ Machiavelli, pp. 140, 141; Ammirato, iv. 145.

² Litta.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Piero degli Albizzi, Lapo da Castiglionchio and Carlo Strozzi.

⁵ Ammirato, iv. 146.

guilds appeared in the Piazza della Signoria, the captain was constrained to withdraw his resignation, Giorgio Scali was seized and dragged to prison amid the hootings of the rabble, and executed on the following day. Tommaso Strozzi escaped to Mantua.¹ Benedetto Alberti, who, disapproving of his colleagues' conduct, had previously dissociated himself from them, was a consenting party to Scali's condemnation.

Again the people resorted to the method, which had been so often tried and had as often failed, of freeing themselves from misrule by some constitutional change. It was now enacted that the Gonfalonier of Justice and one half of the priors were to be chosen from the seven *Arti Maggiori*, and the other half of the priors from the fourteen *Arti Minori*. On the *Otto di Guardia* and some other Boards the *Arti Maggiori* were to have a majority. The three *Arti* which had been created by the *Ciompi* were disestablished, and all persons who had been punished for participation in recent conspiracies were pardoned.²

These changes, it will be noticed, were all of an anti-popular character. Democracy in Florence, having reached its zenith after the rising of the *Ciompi*, now began to wane, and it continued to do so (except during a short-lived revival in the days of Savonarola) until the times of the later Medici, when it finally disappeared.

Almost the first act of the new government was one of base ingratitude and altogether inexcusable. This was the exile of Michele Lando, who had saved Florence from anarchy and bloodshed by his courage and prudence.³

¹ Ammirato, iv. 147. The descendants of T. Strozzi are still living at Mantua.

² Gino Capponi, ii. 49.

³ Ammirato, iv. 150.

CHAPTER X

1382-1406

WARS BETWEEN FLORENCE AND MILAN—THE ALBIZZI DOMINATION—CAPTURE OF PISA

NO change for the better took place in the domestic affairs of Florence during the next two years. There was the same spirit of unrest, the same distrust of those in authority, and the same faction warfare as in the past. There were, too, the same abortive attempts to remedy those evils by constitutional changes. Before the end of the year there were four risings of the *Ciompi* which were suppressed by the *popolani grassi*, whose power was rapidly returning.¹ And other attempts to overthrow the government would doubtless have been made, but for the presence in the vicinity of the city of Sir John Hawkwood and his troop, who were still in the pay of the Signory.

In 1383 great destruction of property was occasioned by the overflowing of the Arno, and this was followed by another visitation of pestilence. A panic seized the citizens, and so many of them fled that a law was passed forbidding anyone to leave the city without a pass from the government. In the same year troops were despatched to ward off an attack on Florence by her exiles, who were congregating in the Casentino from the various cities in which they had found refuge. Notwithstanding these disasters Florence showed no signs of weakness or poverty. In the following year she raised an army of 60,000 foot and 20,000 horse in three days, and purchased Arezzo from De Coucy, Charles of Durazzo's lieutenant, for 200,000 florins.² This army was sent, in accordance with a preconcerted arrangement with De Coucy, to enable him to effect the sale of Arezzo under a show of compulsion.

¹ Napier, ii. 451-453.

² Ammirato, iv. 163; Goro Dati's *Istoria di Firenze* (1735), pp. 26, 37.

The re-acquisition of Arezzo after an interval of forty-one years gave rise to much rejoicing. The public and private entertainments given to celebrate the event were of more than ordinary magnificence. Of the latter, those of Benedetto degli Alberti so far surpassed all others in splendour as to occasion a widespread jealousy, and an animosity which had long been felt for him by a section of the aristocracy was now shared by the lower orders.¹ This gave the Albizzi, who desired vengeance for the death of Piero, the head of the house, who had been unjustly executed in 1380, and the Captains of the *Parte Guelfa*, who had not forgiven the curtailment of their powers by the triumvirate, the opportunity for which they had been waiting, and they proceeded to work Benedetto degli Alberti's downfall. By their machinations, and for an absurdly inadequate cause, he was exiled for two years. He went to Jerusalem in 1387, and died at Rhodes on his way home. Public opinion at once veered round, and when his body was brought back to Florence it was buried with public honours. He seems to have been one of the few men of his day who rose above party spirit, and so he incurred the ill will of all. He opposed alike the tyranny of the Guelph leaders and of their opponents, and worked solely for his country's good.²

Nor was Benedetto degli Alberti the only victim to party animosity. The Guelph aristocracy had not learned wisdom by experience, and no sooner had they regained their ascendancy than they resorted to the pestilent system of admonitions. Members of many leading families were thus persecuted, among whom were the Beneni, Benci, Adimari, Manelli, and Alderotti.³ Some of these were driven into exile, and thus what Guicciardini calls "the worst evil a State can suffer from" was increased.⁴

Meanwhile foreign affairs were demanding more than ordinary watchfulness. The dispute for the crown of Naples, the Schism in the Church, and the ambition of Gian Galeazzo Visconti were still disturbing elements in Italian politics. As external disorders prejudicially affected her commerce Florence assumed the rôle of mediator. The claim of Louis of Anjou to the Neapolitan throne had been espoused by Pope Urban VI., and that of his rival, young King Ladislas, by the anti-Pope,

¹ Ammirato, iv. 164.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 182.

³ *Ibid.*, iv. 183.

⁴ *Counsels and Reflections of Francesco Guicciardini*, translated by Ninian Hill Thomson (1890), p. 140.

Clement VII. Florence endeavoured to bring about a marriage between Louis and Giovanna, a sister of Ladislas, and to reconcile Urban with Ladislas. Both attempts failed, but the ambassadors whom she sent to Avignon were treated with marked respect by the anti-Pope. After their return Clement sent an embassy to Florence to urge her to take a leading part in summoning a Council of the Church in order to put an end to the Schism; but notwithstanding her French sympathies she was too entirely Italian to help a pope at Avignon, and replied "that it was for kings and princes to summon councils."¹

But it was on the northern horizon that the blackest clouds were looming. The policy of the Visconti, as we have seen, had for many years past caused Florence intermittent fits of alarm, and when, in 1385, Gian Galeazzo (the son of Galeazzo I.)² treacherously murdered his uncle Bernabò and made himself sole lord of Milan, it became a source of graver danger than ever. Gian Galeazzo was one of the strangest products of an age that was prodigal of varied types. "False and pitiless he joined to immeasurable ambition a genius for enterprise, and to immovable constancy a personal timidity which he did not endeavour to conceal. . . . He seemed to acknowledge himself the enemy of the whole world."³ In 1387 he overthrew the Scala dynasty, and in the following year he defeated Francesco da Carrara, thus adding Verona and Padua to his dominions.⁴ He was now master of all northern Italy except Venice, Mantua, Ferrara, and Bologna, and it was an open secret that he aspired to the sovereignty of the whole peninsula.

It was not, however, till he began to meddle with Tuscan affairs that Florence thought it necessary to check his growing power. In 1390 she obtained secret information that Siena was seeking his protection, and that he was intriguing for the acquisition of Pisa. It was obvious that the independence of every Italian State was threatened, but Florence and Bologna alone recognised the danger. Having tried in vain to obtain assistance from Venice, Naples, or the Pope, these two Republics solicited

¹ Creighton, i. 100.

² Galeazzo I. and Bernabò had divided the Milanese territory between them. Gian Galeazzo succeeded to his father's share in 1378.

³ Sismondi's *Italian Republics* (1832), p. 190. When posterity is passing sentence on him a recommendation for mercy may be put forward, on the ground that he built the Certosa at Pavia and the Milan Cathedral.

⁴ Gino Capponi, ii. 63.

aid from the King of France, but fortunately for Italy he also refused their request. They then determined to act alone, and declared war on Visconti.

Florence, conscious that her very existence was at stake, set about the task which she had undertaken with tremendous energy. Heavy taxes were levied on property lay and ecclesiastical. Enormous sums were raised on loan. It was illegal for the State to borrow at a higher rate than 5 per cent., and when no more money could be obtained on such terms, a notary suggested the adoption of the practice of the unjust steward in the parable, namely, that for every 100 florins borrowed the government should write down 200 or 300, thus paying to the lender 10 or 15 per cent.¹ Sir John Hawkwood was recalled from Naples, the services of Rinaldo Orsini and Count Giovanni d'Armagnac, two other *condottieri*, were secured, and the Signory "sent to all parts of Christendom to hire captains and soldiers and to stir up princes and sovereigns for the destruction of Milan."²

Hawkwood was despatched with some 7,000 men through Bolognese territory in order to effect a junction with d'Armagnac's troops, that were expected to reach Piedmont in May, 1391, but their progress was delayed, and Hawkwood found himself in a precarious position. He was without provisions, the whole of Gian Galeazzo's army, numbering 26,000 men, under Jacopo dal Verme, was immediately in front of him, while his retreat was cut off by the rivers Oglio, Mincio, and Adige. He entrenched himself in a naturally strong position at Paterno Fasolaro, and for four days the enemy vainly endeavoured to allure him to battle. Jacopo, thinking that he had the little Florentine army in a trap, mockingly sent a caged fox to Hawkwood, who, good-humouredly remarking to the bearer that the animal did not seem dull and would soon discover a way out, broke one of the bars of the cage and set it at liberty.³ On the fifth day he made a vigorous sortie, killing or wounding 1,500 of the foe. A day or two afterwards he ostentatiously cleared the ground in front of his camp, and having led Dal Verme to believe that he meant to

¹ The funds so raised were known as "two for one" or "three for one," as the case might be. Florence required all the money she raised, for the war cost her 3,500,000 florins during the first six months.

² Ammirato, iv. 206.

³ *Sir John Hawkwood*. By John Temple-Leader and Guiseppe Marcotti. London, 1889, p. 251.

give battle, at midnight he commenced a noiseless retreat. Before morning the bulk of his army was safely across the Oglio, and the passage of the remainder was effected under cover of 400 picked archers. But Dal Verme was not to be deprived of his prey without another effort. He caused the dykes of the Adige to be cut during the night, and the plain occupied by Hawkwood's troops was almost immediately submerged. Without a moment's delay Hawkwood ordered cavalry and infantry to mount the same horses, and with two men on every horse he continued his perilous retreat. So hasty was his departure that he sacrificed his baggage and left his standards flying. The waters were often above the horses' girths. The country was intersected with numerous wide and deep ditches. Many a horse and rider perished, but Hawkwood piloted the greater number of his troops during part of a night and a day, until they reached high ground and were thence led in security to Castelbaldo, near Padua. This brilliant exploit has given Hawkwood a place amongst the most famous *condottieri*.

Not long after d'Armagnac's army reached Italy it was completely routed near Alexandria and he himself mortally wounded.¹ The safety of Florence now depended on Hawkwood alone, and he was at once recalled from Padua. Dal Verme followed him, and with the exception of some skirmishes the campaign was occupied with manœuvres, marches, and counter-marches, during which Hawkwood managed to protect Florence, and so completely held his own that at the end of the year Gian Galeazzo was ready to treat for peace.

Florence liberally recognised what she owed to Hawkwood's skill and courage. Before the end of the war the Signory had made him a Florentine citizen, had raised his pension from 1,200 to 3,200 gold florins, and settled an annuity on his wife and marriage portions on his daughters.² On his death, which occurred in 1394, he was honoured with burial in the choir of the cathedral, and 410 florins were spent by the State on his funeral. "But to give a minute account of these obsequies, the number

¹ There is considerable doubt whether Hawkwood's retreat took place before or after d'Armagnac's defeat. I have followed Temple-Leader in placing it before, but see Napier, ii. 488.

² Temple-Leader's *Sir John Hawkwood*, 265. Hawkwood married in 1377 Donnina, an illegitimate daughter of Bernabò Visconti. His eldest son, John, returned to England and settled on the ancestral estates of the Hawkwoods, at Hedingham Sibil, in Essex. He was naturalised in 1407 (*Dictionary of National Biography*, xxv. 241).

of tapers, banners, and escutcheons, the chargers with their trappings of gold brocade, the black dresses presented to his family and household, would be more in the nature of boasting than is consistent with the dignity of history.”¹ It was decreed that a sumptuous monument, to be adorned with marble figures, should be erected in his memory, but this direction was never carried out. An equestrian portrait of him was, however, painted by Paolo Uccello over the north-west door of the Duomo, which may still be seen.

Of Hawkwood's courage and military talent there can be no question. Hallam says that he was “the first distinguished commander who had appeared in Europe since the destruction of the Roman Empire.”² Some of the ablest captains of the day — Sforza, Braccio, Carlo Malatesta, Paolo Orsini — were trained in his troop. Like the rest of his profession, he was ready to place his services at the disposal of the highest bidder; but while an engagement lasted he was usually trustworthy, and he was invariably faithful to the Florentine Republic.³ It is hardly fair to describe him as barbarous.⁴ The sack of Faenza and the massacre at Cesena are no doubt blots on his memory, but in the former he was careful to spare life, and in the latter he refused to carry out to the full the orders of his employer, the bloodthirsty Cardinal Robert of Geneva. During his last campaign in Lombardy he purchased both provisions and provender, to the surprise of the peasantry, who expected to be plundered by every free-lance captain, and the behaviour and discipline of his troops, as compared with those of d'Armagnac, was favourably remarked upon by his contemporaries. He must be judged by the standards of his day. Beside many of the *condottieri*, of his own and of a later date, he was merciful and honest, and beside some of them he was a paragon of virtue.⁵

By a treaty which was concluded on January 26th, 1392, it was stipulated that Gian Galeazzo should not meddle with Tuscan affairs, or Florence with those of Lombardy, and that the lordship of Padua should be restored to Francesco da Carrara. But Florence was too prudent to place much reliance on Gian

¹ Ammirato, iv. 268. Hawkwood's reputation must have reached England, for in 1384 Richard II. commissioned him to treat for alliances with Florence, Perugia, Bologna, and other cities (Rymer's *Fœdera, sub ann.*).

² *The Middle Ages* (1819), i. 499.

³ *Dictionary of National Biography*, xxv. 422. ⁴ Creighton, i. 65.

⁵ Federigo I., Duke of Urbino, was perhaps the most estimable of all the fifteenth-century *condottieri*.

Galeazzo's word, and she entered into a league with Pope Boniface IX., the lords of Ferrara, Mantua, Faenza, Padua, and Pisa, and the republic of Bologna to resist Milanese aggression. The friendship of Pisa, however, she lost before the year was out. The long-standing rivalry between the two cities had been suspended by the personal influence of Gambacorti, the ruler of Pisa, who in 1392 was treacherously overthrown and slain by his friend and Chancellor Jacopo d'Appiano, and Pisa thereupon reverted to her old attitude of hostility towards Florence. She commenced intriguing with Gian Galeazzo, and at his instigation and with his secret assistance she declared war against Florence. A desultory warfare between the two States was carried on for the next four or five years, but not much injury was inflicted on either side. When Gian Galeazzo found that his ends were not being furthered by this means, he threw off the mask and openly violated the treaty of 1392. In the spring of 1397 he attacked Mantua and sent a body of cavalry from Siena into Florentine territory, which ravaged the country as far as Signa. At length Venice, who with an unaccountable want of foresight had a few years before aided Gian Galeazzo in the acquisition of Padua, awoke to the danger with which she was threatened by his ambition. In 1398 she threw in her lot with the anti-Milanese league, and Gian Galeazzo, not feeling equal to cope with so powerful a combination, consented to sign a truce for ten years. Nevertheless he continued to increase his possessions. In 1399 he purchased the lordship of Pisa from Gherardo, the son of Jacopo d'Appiano, and in the same year Perugia and Siena ceded their liberties into his hands. Although he ostensibly observed the terms of the treaty of 1398, his movements caused Florence uneasiness. She was aware that he had made an unsuccessful attempt to induce Pope Boniface to desert the league, and that he had secret emissaries within her walls inciting her citizens to rebellion. And when, in 1400, he began making great preparations for war, she thought it necessary to take defensive measures. There was little doubt that he was still contemplating the conquest of Tuscany, and no time was to be lost. She set about the work of resistance with vigour, but her efforts ended in disaster. In consideration of a large money payment Rupert, the recently proclaimed Emperor of Germany,¹ sent an army

¹ Florence had aided in bringing about the deposition of the Emperor Wenzel on account of his having conferred on Gian Galeazzo the title of Duke of Milan (Creighton, i. 170).

to her assistance, which was routed near Brescia by Visconti's troops and driven back across the Alps. She next sought aid from Francesco da Carrara, whom she had assisted in regaining the lordship of Padua, and Giovanni Bentivoglio, the new lord of Bologna, and the allied forces of the three cities met those of the invader near Bologna. Fortune still smiled on Gian Galeazzo, whose forces, after a bloody struggle on June 26th, 1402, were completely victorious. Giovanni Bentivoglio was killed, and Bologna was captured. The news of this defeat occasioned at Florence a consternation bordering on despair. The city was indeed in a sorry plight. Her soldiers were slain, her generals prisoners, and her exchequer empty. Nor had she any hope of obtaining foreign aid.¹ She was altogether unprepared for a siege, and any day Visconti's army, flushed with victory, might be at her gates. But when all seemed lost the tide of fortune turned. The Milanese army lingered at Bologna, and before the order to advance was given, as Machiavelli has it, "in the very nick of time" Gian Galeazzo Visconti died. The general gloom into which the city had been plunged gave way to universal rejoicing, and crowds of citizens went about the streets singing the verse from the Psalms, "Our soul is escaped, even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken and we are delivered."

Thus ended a series of wars of which Florence had good reason to be proud. Almost single-handed she had checked the ambitious designs of the Visconti, and it is probable that but for her resistance Gian Galeazzo would have possessed himself of Tuscany, and possibly he might have subjugated Italy. It was no idle boast of Ammirato when he wrote "that it was deemed both at the time and in his day very noteworthy and marvellous that a single state, possessing neither seaport nor standing army, and unprotected by rugged mountains or great rivers, should have been able to resist so great a power solely by the industry and wealth of its inhabitants."²

We must now go back a few years and note the domestic troubles from which Florence had been suffering while the Milanese war was going on. The excitement and anxiety for the general welfare occasioned by Gian Galeazzo's aggressive policy did not repress party feuds. Class jealousies and personal animosities were as rife as ever, and were cankering the very core of the Commonwealth. The intestine affairs of the city were indeed

¹ Ammirato, iv. 337.

² *Ibid.*, iv. 339.

in much the same condition as at the time of the *Ciompi* rising. The Guelph party was once more in the ascendant, and its leaders were oppressing their rivals by admonitions, while the Medici, Alberti, Strozzi, and other principal families were plotting and stirring up popular feeling against the dominant faction. The disfranchisement of the Alberti family, which had been removed in 1391, was reimposed in 1393. In the latter year Maso degli Albizzi (the nephew of Piero whose life had been sacrificed to popular clamour) became gonfalonier, and he seized the opportunity offered by the discovery of a plot in which some of the Alberti were implicated, to deprive once more the whole family of their civic rights. The people became alarmed at Maso's arbitrary conduct, and the city was soon in an uproar, one party in the Piazza shouting "Long live the people and the *Parte Guelfa*," and the other "Long live the people and the *Arti*."¹ After some bloodshed the latter faction were driven out of the Piazza, and they at once repaired to the house of Vieri de' Medici and besought him to become their leader, and to aid them in throwing off the tyranny of the Guelph party as his cousin Salvestro had done. But either from virtue, caution, or timidity Vieri refused the office and would only consent to mediate between the two parties. Had he been ambitious it is quite possible that he might have made himself lord of Florence.² But the hour of Medician sovereignty had not yet come. With difficulty Vieri persuaded the malcontents that they would be more likely to gain their ends by gentleness than force, and he prevailed on them to lay down their arms. He soon learned, however, that he had been mistaken. He had succeeded in pacifying the people, but he failed altogether in inducing the Signory to act with either leniency or justice. The Alberti and other leaders of the popular faction were exiled, and laws were passed to strengthen the hands of the government, of so harsh a character as to meet with the disapproval even of many of its own supporters. The extent to which interference with liberty for party purposes was carried may be gathered from the fact that Rinaldo Gianfiglazzi, a thorough-going Guelph and one of the most illustrious members of "the Party" was summoned before the Signory and threatened with disfranchisement if he permitted two of his children to marry members of the opposite faction.³

In 1396 an attempt, made in a thoroughly constitutional

¹ Ammirato, iv. 263.

² Machiavelli, p. 176.

³ Napier, ii. 520.

manner, to procure a more equitable treatment by the government of their opponents, only led to the banishment of Donati Acciaiuoli for twenty years and to the imposition of heavy fines on the Medici and Alberti.

By practices such as these the government of Florence had, at the end of the fourteenth century, passed once more into the hands of a clique of wealthy merchants, and become, as in 1377, a Guelph oligarchy.¹ Again Florence groaned beneath the yoke of a few insolent *grandi*, whose chief, Maso degli Albizzi, was in fact, though not in name, almost her absolute ruler. Indeed, one of his sons had been heard to boast in a foreign court that his father had more power than many a titled sovereign. That such a government should be long tolerated without resistance was impossible. In 1397 a conspiracy was on foot between the *fuorusciti* at Bologna (among whom were members of the Medici, Ricci, and Cavicciuli families) with the object of inciting an insurrection and murdering Maso degli Albizzi. It was however premature or ill organised. An armed band entered the city shouting "Long live the people" and "Death to tyrants," but the people did not respond to their call, and they were forced to take refuge in the cathedral, where they were cut to pieces or captured and executed by the *podestà* and his guard.²

In 1400 another conspiracy for the overthrow of the government, in which many of the opposition leaders were implicated, was on foot. It was nipped in the bud through the treachery of one of the conspirators, Salvestro Cavicciuli, and sixty prominent citizens were declared rebels, including the entire family of the Medici, almost all of the Ricci and Alberti, and many of the Strozzi, Scali, Adimari, and Altoviti. The intensity of party spirit in Florence at this time is almost incredible. It would neither (as has been seen) yield to war, nor had pestilence the power to allay it. For in the very year of the last-mentioned conspiracy there was a terrible outbreak of plague in the city, from which from 600 to 800 persons died daily. At the time of the festival of San Giovanni, which was by custom dedicated

¹ The government was monopolised by Maso degli Albizzi, Filippo Corsini, Andrea Vittori, Gianozzo Biliotti, Nofri Arnolfi, Rinieri Peruzzi, Leonardo dell' Antella, Rinaldo Gianfiglazzi, Francesco Rucellai, Bartolommeo Valori, Francesco Fioraventi, Andrea Minerbetti, Guido del Palagio, Forese Salviati, Lorenzo Ridolfi, and Michele and Lotto Castellani (Napier, ii. 522).

² Ammirato, iv. 292.

to amusement and revelry, the streets of the city were silent and forsaken.

This epidemic was traceable to a strange religious revival, which the distracted condition of the Church and the disturbed state of Europe aroused in the year 1399.¹ Whether it had its origin in France, Spain, England, or Scotland, seems uncertain. The advent of a new century, to be ushered in by a great Jubilee, seems to have awakened a sense of national sinfulness and a spirit of contrition. Large bands of enthusiasts, clad in white garments, and known as the "White Penitents" or the "White Companies," marched in solemn processions from city to city, singing the *Stabat Mater dolorosa* and other penitential hymns. The movement made its way across the Alps, through Piedmont, to Genoa. The Genoese carried the torch of religious fervour to Lucca, and the Luccese to Florence. The band of Florentines that continued the work numbered no less than 40,000.² Pistoja, Pisa, Bologna, Modena, and Imola were affected, and before long the contagion spread through Rome to Naples. Each pilgrimage lasted about nine days, which were spent in fasting, prayer, and exhortation. The preachers inculcated forgiveness of injuries, and laboured to effect the reconciliation of enemies and the restitution of ill-gotten gains. At the end of the ninth day the pilgrims usually returned to their native cities. The bands comprised those of all classes, ages, and sexes, and their proceedings were marked throughout by the utmost decorum. While the movement lasted it was productive of good. It was however but a transient wave of higher spiritual life, and it soon ebbed, leaving behind it no permanent moral results.³ Its physical results were disastrous, for the congregating of large, undisciplined masses of human beings, gave rise to the pestilence which devastated Italy at the dawning of the fifteenth century.

The death of Gian-Galeazzo Visconti did not, as might have been expected, prove a pacific, but rather the reverse. He left three sons—Gian-Maria and Filippo-Maria, both boys under fifteen, and Gabriele-Maria, who, though older, was illegitimate—and among them his territories were divided. The duchy of Milan proper, Bologna, Siena, and Perugia, fell to

¹ Creighton, i. 145.

² Ammirato, iv. 309.

³ Corio says that some of the White Penitents returned to a worse life than ever after the movement subsided (Symonds, i. 560).

the lot of Gian-Maria; Pavia, Verona, Vicenza, and other smaller states to that of Filippo-Maria; while Crema and Pisa were allotted to Gabriele-Maria. This partition was in itself sufficient to free Italy from all fear of the Visconti dynasty. Despots, who had been despoiled by Gian-Galeazzo Visconti, flew to arms, with the object of regaining their possessions; while other States, that had an eye to their own aggrandisement, took part in the struggle. Alexandria and Pavia were seized by Facino Cane, Parma and Reggio by Ottobuon Terzo, and Brescia fell into the hands of Pandolfo Malatesta; Verona revolted and Piacenza was almost depopulated by internal discord.¹ Florence, who aimed at the acquisition of Pisa, and Pope Boniface IX., who desired to recover Bologna and Perugia, entered into a league with other States who had also their own ends to serve, and the allies placed their forces under the command of the great *condottiere* Alberigo da Barbiano. War soon raged in Tuscany, Lombardy was in a state of anarchy, and before the end of 1404 the vast fabric which Gian-Galeazzo had built up with infinite craft and patience was in ruins. As soon as Bologna and Perugia had been reduced to subjection, the Pope, in spite of the remonstrances of the Florentines, put an end to the league. Florence had good ground for complaint, for she had expended half a million florins in the service of her allies and had gained nothing for herself. She now set herself to attain the object of her desire single-handed. The conduct of Gabriele-Maria was certainly paving the way to her ultimate success. His government of Pisa was tyrannous, and his policy was dictated by avarice. He extorted immense sums of money from his subjects by fabricating false charges against them. From a single citizen he took no less than 25,000 florins.² Accordingly, when in 1404 Florence made a sudden attack on Pisa, she expected that it would fall an easy prey into her hands. But the Pisans made a stubborn and successful resistance, preferring the cruelty and rapacity of a tyrant to the yoke of their hated rival. The only result of this premature attempt was that Gabriele-Maria, feeling his position insecure, placed Pisa under the protection of the King of France, who was then in possession of Genoa.

¹ Napier, iii. 6, and Symonds, i. 137. We hear also of the Benzoni at Crema, the Rusconi at Como, the Soardi and Colleoni at Bergamo, the Landi at Bobbio, and the Cavalcabò at Cremona.

² Ammirato, iv. 354.

The designs of Florence being thus checked for a time, she commenced military operations against Siena in order to chastise her for having voluntarily submitted to Gian-Galeazzo in 1399. Siena had just contrived to free herself from the Visconti rule, but she was in so depressed a condition that she was constrained to purchase peace by the cession to Florence of Montepulciano. Florence then turned her attention to certain feudal lords who had aided the Visconti during the late war, and on the plea that she wished to castigate them, she captured no less than thirty-two strongholds, "thus considerably enlarging the boundaries of the Republic."¹

Pisa was now the only spot in Tuscany which was subject to a Visconti. It was obviously impossible for Florence to attempt to dispossess Gabriele-Maria by force without provoking the hostility of France, so she resorted to other means. In the Great Schism, which had torn the Church asunder during the last quarter of a century, Florence had taken no active part, but she had leant towards the side of the pope. France, who had been the mainstay of the anti-popes, was now endeavouring to enlist the support of Florence on behalf of the then Anti-Pope Innocent VII. The Florentine government seeing a chance of turning this to the advantage of the Republic, secretly communicated to the king that the allegiance of Florence to the anti-pope was to be purchased by the sale to her of Pisa. A rumour of this proposal reached Gabriele-Maria, who, indignant at the thought of his patrimony being sold behind his back, and conscious that his unpopularity was daily rendering his position less secure, determined to steal a march on his protector. Accordingly, he privately intimated to Maso degli Albizzi that Pisa might be purchased from him, and the Signory, hoping to obtain the coveted prize without involving Florence in the quarrel between popes and anti-popes, instructed Maso to treat with him. But through the faithlessness of a friend, to whom Gabriele had confided his design, the contemplated bargain was made public and the Pisans rose in arms to prevent their native city from passing into the hands of her traditional foe. On July 21st, 1405, Gabriele was forced to take refuge in the citadel, and not feeling even there sure of his safety, he fled to Sarzana. Florence, perceiving that it was useless to treat with Gabriele, resumed negotiations with France, which resulted in a contract for the sale to her

¹ Ammirato, iv. 360.

of Pisa, together with the outlying fortresses of Ripafratta and S. Maria in Castello, in consideration of a money payment of 260,000 florins and a covenant that she would recognise the spiritual authority of Anti-Pope Benedict XIII. The citadel was duly handed over to her commissioner, Gino Capponi (the historian), on August 31st, but did not remain in her possession many days, for it was attacked on September 6th by the enraged citizens and wrested with ease from the cowardly band of mercenaries by whom it was garrisoned.

The Florentines turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of the Pisans, for they were furious at the loss of their 260,000 florins, and "every man in Florence determined that he would go naked sooner than not conquer Pisa."¹ It was well known, however, that this would be no easy matter, "for the walls of Pisa were strong, and its inhabitants unanimous in their determination not to be ruled by the Florentines."² To take the city by storm would be, it was thought, impossible, so a blockade was determined on. Accordingly an army was despatched to invest it, a fleet was stationed at the mouth of the Arno, and by the spring of the following year (1406) the introduction of food into the city was entirely prevented. Ladislas, King of Naples, and Ottobuon Terzo, lord of Parma—the only potentates from whom Pisa expected aid—were "squared" by the astute *Dieci di Balìa*, the former by a promise that Florence would not interfere with his designs at Rome, and the latter by a bribe. After the blockade had lasted six months the sufferings of the Pisans from want of food became so acute that (as was done at Pistoja one hundred years before) they turned all their women, children, and infirm men out of the starving city. The women were stripped half naked by the besieging forces and then, branded on each cheek with the Florentine *giglio* or with noses cut off, driven back to the city gates, and some of the men were hung within sight of its walls. These brutal atrocities are described with cynical indifference by Gino Capponi, the Florentine Commissioner, who was present and was probably responsible for them. When hope of further resistance was at an end Giovanni Gambacorti, who after the flight of Gabriele-Maria was once more the most influential personage in Pisa, opened secret negotiations for a surrender. The Florentine Commissioners were well aware that the city would not hold out many days,

¹ G. Capponi, *Scrit. Rer. Ital.*, vol. xviii. p. 1131. ² *Ibid.*, p. 1132.

but in order to avoid the destruction of property which would follow if it were stormed and sacked they consented to treat, and it was arranged that if the city, citadel, and outlying fortresses were surrendered, pillage both within and without the walls should be prohibited. It was also stipulated that Gambacorti should receive 50,000 florins with the citizenship of Florence, and that his opponents should be declared rebels.

The carrying into effect of this agreement was, however, no easy matter, as the citizens had been kept in profound ignorance of its existence by Gambacorti.¹ The free-lance captains in the employ of Florence were quarrelling among themselves and were almost in a state of insubordination. Attendolo Sforza (the father of the famous Francesco and the founder of the family) and Tartaglia were on bad terms and could not agree as to the gate by which the city should be entered. It required much tact on the part of Gino Capponi² to maintain discipline, and but for his firmness Pisa would undoubtedly have been sacked. At length the arrangements for its surrender were completed, and they were carried out in an orderly manner on October 9th, 1406. When the Florentines entered the city they found it in a deplorable condition. There was in it "only a little sugar, a little cassia, and three lean cows. Every other thing was eaten up to the grass that grew in the streets." As the soldiers marched past the houses they threw pieces of bread to those who were looking out of the windows, and "never did birds of prey seize their food with the voracity with which they threw themselves upon the bread."³ When a supply of food was sent into the city many died from eating too ravenously.

The fall of Pisa was celebrated in Florence with great rejoicing. The Madonna dell' Imbruneta was paraded through the streets, and the 9th of October was ordered to be kept as a national holiday for ever.⁴ The treatment of the Pisans by their conquerors was as ungenerous as it was impolitic. Many of them were banished and more were compelled to take up their abode

¹ He seems to have acted in the interests of his city, but he certainly did not neglect his own. Ser Cambi considers his conduct was infamous, but Gino Capponi's view of it is perhaps the most reliable (*Script. Rer. Ital.*, xviii. 795).

² He was appointed governor of Pisa for eight months after its capture.

³ Gino Capponi, cited by Trollope, ii. 335.

⁴ This event marks not only the high tide of Florentine commercial prosperity, but also the date at which attention was first paid to nautical and astronomical studies in Florence (Villari, i. 340).

in Florence. The exiles for the most part took to the career of arms, and their services were always at the disposal of the enemies of their victor; while those who were compulsorily domiciled in Florence swelled the ranks of the ever-numerous body of malcontents. The depopulation of Pisa which thus commenced inflicted a blow from which she never recovered. Henceforth her name, except during one short eventful interval, appears no more on the pages of Tuscan history but as a subject state.¹

The causes of the absorption of Pisa by Florence are not easy to trace. Pisa was an important city when Florence was little more than a village. Her geographical position gave her opportunities of developing her commerce which Florence never possessed. For centuries before Florence had extended her territory to the seaboard, Pisa had a powerful fleet and was mistress of half the Mediterranean. Perhaps one of the contributory causes of her downfall may be found in the fact that in the prolonged struggle between Guelphs and Ghibellines, Florence had espoused the winning and Pisa the losing side. Her maritime advantages, moreover, had not been without drawbacks, for they had brought her into contact with another powerful rival, and she had been terribly weakened by the crushing defeat which the Genoese galleys had inflicted on her at Meloria. Probably the dissimilar fate of the two cities arose from a combination of causes, of which difference of national character was not the least important.

And, again, the parts which Pisa and Florence played in the development of Italian Art present a strange contrast. Pisa had given birth to a man who had rejuvenated Art, and whose influence on the world, both in durability and extent, probably exceeded that of Dante, half a century before Dante was born.² And yet it was Florence, and not Pisa, which dominated European taste and filled the galleries of Europe with their most precious treasures. Possibly Pisa entered on her work, as a promoter of artistic progress, too soon, and her energies, being exhausted before the Renaissance movement culminated, had never a fair chance of development.

¹ Napier, iii. 24.

² Niccola Pisano. See Lindsay, i. 357.

ART AND LITERATURE 1375-1406

ART AND LITERATURE

1375-1406

SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	AUTHORS
Ghiberti	Agnolo Gaddi	Franco Sacchetti
Brunelleschi	Antonio Veneziano	Giovanni Fiorentino
Jacopo della Quercia	Spinello Aretino	Marchione di Coppo Stefani
		Piero Minerbetti
		Gino Capponi

SCULPTURE

Tuscan Sculpture was now entering on a new phase. In the hands of Niccola Pisano and Arnolfo di Cambio it had been architectural in its character; in those of Giotto, Andrea Pisano, and Orcagna it became allegorical; under the influence of Ghiberti and Donatello it was about to become (for good and evil) pictorial.

GHIBERTI¹ was born at Florence in 1378, and was brought up as a goldsmith, but it was as a painter that he first distinguished himself. He was engaged in painting frescoes in Carlo Malatesta's palace at Rimini in 1399, when the Signory of Florence decided to erect another bronze gate in the Baptistery, and invited artists from all parts of Italy, who would be willing to undertake the work, to send in their names. Ghiberti determined to compete, and at once repaired to Florence. Six of the competitors, of whom Ghiberti was one,² were selected, and desired to model and cast a single bronze panel representing the sacrifice of Isaac. In 1401 the designs were submitted for adjudication, and the judges held that those of Ghiberti and Brunelleschi were superior to the other four, but hesitated to decide which of the two was the best. It is said that, in their difficulty, they consulted Donatello, but, as he was a youth of fifteen years old at the time, this seems unlikely. They were not, however, called upon for a decision, for Brunelleschi, conscious of the superiority of his rival's design, generously withdrew from the contest. The trial panels sent in by these two competitors were preserved, and may still be seen in the Bargello.

¹ His full name was Lorenzo di Cione Ghiberti.

² The other competitors were Brunelleschi, Jacopo della Quercia, Niccola d'Arezzo, Valdambrini of Siena, and Simone of Colle (Perkins, i. 125).

A HISTORY OF FLORENCE

is said that Ghiberti owed his victory to the advice of his father, Bartolo di Michiele, who was an eminent goldsmith.¹ His success determined his future career. He forsook painting, and the remainder of his life was devoted entirely to sculpture. The gate for which he now received the commission was not completed for twenty-one years. He was then ordered to make another gate for the Baptistery, and this one was not set up till 1452. These two marvellous productions will be referred to again, and the peculiarities of Ghiberti's style noticed, when the periods during which they were made are reviewed.

JACOPO DELLA QUERCIA (1374-1438) was one of the most eminent of the Tuscan sculptors of this period. He was a Sienese, but he worked for a short time at Florence. After unsuccessfully competing for the Baptistery gates he sculptured (1401-1402) the bas-relief of a Madonna della Cintola in a mandorla, which is over one of the doors on the north side of the Duomo.²

PAINTING

Not one of the three artists whose works are about to be mentioned—Agnolo Gaddi, Antonio Veneziano, and Spinello Aretino—can be placed in the first rank.³ Although in some respects, principally in technique, their works occasionally show an advance on those of their predecessors, it is difficult to detect any decided progress. There was, indeed, in the period under review, a pause in the onward movement of Painting. Orcagna was dead, Masaccio was not born, and Fra Angelico was but a boy.⁴ The progress of Sculpture had also been delayed by the non-appearance of an artist of real genius, but the pause did not last so long. Within ten years of Orcagna's death Brunelleschi and Ghiberti were born, and during the next decade Michelozzo and Donatello came into the world. But more than forty years

¹ Perkins, i. 126.

² Richa, vi. 25. Baldinucci attributes it to Nanni di Banco. One of the finest monuments of this, or indeed of any other period, is the tomb of Ilaria Guinigi in Lucca Cathedral that was sculptured by Quercia in 1413.

³ Gherardo Starnina, who died c. 1408, was probably as talented as any artist of his day, but his reputation rests on Vasari's word, and on his having been the teacher of Masolino, as all his authentic works have perished. Possibly some frescoes in Prato Cathedral are his (Crowe and Cav., i. 496-498).

⁴ There was a Camaldolese monk, Don Jacopo, celebrated as an illuminator of manuscripts, and, according to Vasari (vol. i. p. 282), unrivalled as a designer of initial letters, who must have been working about this time.

elapsed before four contemporary painters of real eminence can be named.

AGNOLO GADDI, of whom mention has already been made, worked, off and on, in Florence till nearly the end of the fourteenth century. In 1391 he painted eight frescoes in the choir of S. Croce, representing the Invention of the Cross, for Jacopo degli Alberti.¹ A Madonna and Saints, which he painted as an altar-piece for the church of San Pancrazio, is now in the *Accademia*, and there is an Annunciation of his, in the Uffizi. Frescoes in S. Maria Novella and in the sacristy of the Carmine have been attributed to him, but without authority. He died in October, 1396.²

ANTONIO VENEZIANO (1309-c. 1386) is said by Vasari to have been a pupil of Agnolo Gaddi, but from their relative ages this seems hardly likely.³ At any rate he carried on and developed the style peculiar to the Florentine Giotteschi, and he forms one of the connecting links between Giotto and Raphael. His works show progress in technical execution,⁴ and he surpasses all his predecessors and contemporaries in the delineation of nature.⁵ Unless Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle's contention that he had a hand in the decoration of the Spanish Chapel⁶ be correct, nothing of his work is now to be seen in Florence, although he spent the greater part of his life there.⁷

SPINELLO ARETINO (1333-1410), as his name indicates, was not born in Florence, but he was one of the Florentine Giotteschi. About the year 1387 he painted a fresco of the legend of S. Benedict on the walls of the sacristy of San Miniato al Monte, a work in which he was more than usually successful.⁸ The left-hand compartment of an altar-piece for the church of S. Felicità in Florence was painted by him about the same time, as well as a Madonna and four Saints for the church of S. Andrea at Lucca,

¹ Crowe and Cav., i. 471; Lindsay, ii. 83.

² Cennino Cennini, who wrote a treatise on Painting, was a pupil of Agnolo Gaddi. No work which can with certainty be assigned to Cennino is extant (Crowe and Cav., i. 477).

³ His style resembles rather that of Giotto and Giovanni da Milano than of Agnolo Gaddi (Crowe and Cav., i. 483).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Lindsay, ii. 88.

⁶ Crowe and Cav., i. 374, 488.

⁷ His reputation rests on his frescoes in the Campo Santo at Pisa, representing stories from the life of S. Ranieri, which were painted in 1386. Vasari considers them the best frescoes in the Campo Santo, an opinion which is partially shared by Lord Lindsay. For a full description of them see Crowe and Cav., i. 484-488.

⁸ Crowe and Cav., ii. 12; Lindsay, ii. 95.

both of which are now in the *Accademia* at Florence. His last works executed in Florence were the frescoes of the Passion of our Lord in an oratory adjoining the Farmacia at S. Maria Novella, which were painted in 1405.

LITERATURE

The period which intervened between the death of Boccaccio and the appearance of Poliziano was barren in the production of first-class Italian literature.¹ The fervid industry with which the study of Latin and Greek was pursued, seems to have checked the growth of creative genius.² FRANCO SACCHETTI and GIOVANNI FIORENTINO were both more or less imitators of Boccaccio. Sacchetti (1335-1410) was the last fourteenth-century writer of any note. His *Novelle*, which consists of short and generally humorous stories (many founded on fact), throw a flood of light on the tastes and customs of the day. Giovanni's *Pecorone* are tales of a similar character, one of which was utilised by Shakespeare as the plot of the *Merchant of Venice*. Both Sacchetti and Giovanni wrote poetry of some little merit.³

MARCHIONE DI COPPO STEFANI, PIERO MINERBETTI, and GINO CAPPONI, three of the minor Florentine chroniclers, were all writing during this period. Stefani belonged to the *Arti Minori*. His work is without literary merit, but that portion of it which relates to events of which he was an eye-witness is a valuable contribution to Florentine history. He died in 1385. Minerbetti's chronicles cover the period from M. di Coppo Stefani's death to 1410.⁴ Gino Capponi, who wrote an account of the Rising of the Ciompi, belonged to one of the leading Florentine families and took an active part in public affairs. He was prior in 1396 and gonfalonier in 1401 and 1418.⁵

LUIGI MARSIGLI and COLUCCIO DE' SALUTATI, though not the authors of any standard works, are deserving of mention for the parts they played in furthering the humanistic movement. In both of them Petrarch had aroused a passion for culture. Marsigli was the founder of a learned society that met at the convent of S. Spirito, in Florence, for the discussion of ethical and metaphysical questions. This was the first of those academies which did so much for the promotion of free thought and scholarship in

¹ Garnett.

² Burckhardt, p. 204.

³ Garnett, pp. 102, 214; Symonds, iv. 148-155.

⁴ Gino Capponi, ii. 232.

⁵ Symonds, i. 243, note.

Italy. Coluccio de' Salutati was the first public servant who utilised his scholarship in the service of the State. In 1375 (the year of Boccaccio's death) he became Chancellor of the Florentine Republic. "He introduced into public documents the gravity of style and melody of phrase he had learned in the school of classic rhetoricians," and Gian Galeazzo Visconti is said to have declared that Coluccio's despatches had done him more harm than a band of mercenaries.¹

¹ Symonds, ii. 104.

CHAPTER XI

1406-1429

THE COUNCIL OF PISA—WARS WITH THE VISCONTI—FISCAL
REFORMS—THE CATASTO

THE Schism which originated in 1378 was still distracting the Church. Urban VI. died in 1389 and was succeeded by Boniface IX., who in his turn was succeeded, in 1404, by Gregory XII. On the death of the Anti-Pope Clement VII. in 1394, Benedict XIII. was elected in his place. Gregory XII. and Benedict XIII. were now therefore the rival claimants to S. Peter's chair. Genuine efforts had been made by kings, cardinals, and universities to end a struggle which was agitating the mind of Christendom, but all had hitherto been defeated, partly by the rival pontiffs, who, while professing a desire for the reunion of the Church, were reluctant to relinquish the doubtful sweets of office, and partly by Ladislas, King of Naples, whose designs on Rome were furthered by the rupture.

At length, in 1406, both Gregory and Benedict declared their willingness to resign, and negotiations commenced for settling the place and manner in which the cardinals of each faction should meet for the election of a new pope. Elaborate arrangements for a conference to be held at Savona between September 20th and November 1st, 1407, were ultimately agreed upon, but when the latter day arrived Gregory failed to put in an appearance. The patience of the world, both lay and clerical, was now exhausted. Everyone was weary of a controversy which turned mainly on technicalities, and which had brought discredit on all concerned. Cardinals on both sides, ashamed of the subterfuges and patent insincerity of the pontiff, whom they had supported, abandoned their allegiance, and determined to cut the Gordian knot by themselves convening a Council of the Church without the concurrence, if need be, of either pope or anti-pope. The

leader of this independent movement was Baldassare Cossa,¹ legate of Bologna, who by disposition and training was more of a pirate than a prelate. He at once set himself to enlist the active support of Florence. During the earlier years of the Schism Florence had preserved an attitude of cautious neutrality. While giving a passive adherence to the pope, she had been careful not to quarrel with the anti-pope. She had, however, been prominent among the would-be peacemakers, caring very little how the dispute ended if only some settlement could be arrived at. She had urged Benedict to subordinate his private interests to those of Christendom, and, at the instance of Gregory, she had besought him to consent to the substitution of some other town for Savona as a place of meeting. She offered to allow a Council to be held anywhere within her territories except at Pisa, and even this reservation she subsequently withdrew.² Early in 1408, in order to facilitate a conference between the two popes, she sent eight ambassadors to escort Gregory from Siena to Lucca, and defrayed the expenses of his journey. When he evinced an intention of proceeding no further she exhorted him "for the love of God and for his oath's sake" to perform his part of the agreement, and she gave him clearly to understand that she did not intend to allow matters to remain any longer as they were. Threats and entreaties were, however, equally unavailing, and Pope Gregory returned under a Florentine escort to Siena. Florence now realised that the Schism was not to be ended by mediation. Moreover, the ecclesiastical questions at issue had become overshadowed by political considerations, and the struggle had assumed a form, which was dislocating civil and commercial affairs, and threatening the peace of Italy. King Ladislas had made himself master of Rome as well as of most of the papal states, and a haughty demand on his part to be allowed to send troops to convoy the pope from Lucca to Siena had almost involved Florence in war.

The Signory, therefore, looked with favour on the action of the independent cardinals, and sanctioned the issue of summonses convening a general Council of the Church at Pisa. By so doing they in fact renounced their allegiance to Gregory, but they hesitated to proclaim their attitude without some authority. So, with the consent of the Grand Council, they called together one hundred and twenty theologians to whom the matter of

¹ Afterwards John XXIII.

² Creighton, 214-219.

their allegiance was referred. This body, after deliberating for three days, declared Gregory XII. a heretic and schismatic and worthy of deposition.¹ The Signory, therefore, at the instance of Cardinal Cossa, entered into a league with Siena for the protection of the Council against attacks from the King of Naples.²

These proceedings of the Signory provoked sharp remonstrances from King Ladislas, who could not hope to retain possession of Rome unless confusion reigned in the Church. He demanded that the Council should be dissolved and threatened a resort to force. Florence refused to recognise his sovereignty over the States of the Church,³ and when he scornfully asked with what troops she would dispute it, her emissary Bartolommeo Valori replied, "With your own," a retort which Ladislas understood, as he well knew the power of Florentine gold.⁴ Ladislas forthwith marched into Tuscany and devastated the country,⁵ but though he captured Cortona, his progress was stayed by the Florentine forces.

Meanwhile the Council had been peacefully deliberating at Pisa. It was opened on March 25th and the attendance was imposing. Twenty-two cardinals, four patriarchs, twenty-four archbishops, one hundred and fifty-one bishops, and one hundred and eighty-nine abbots were present either personally or by proxy, besides generals of the great Orders, representatives of Chapters, and doctors of law and divinity. The kings of England, France, and many smaller States sent their ambassadors, and eleven Universities (including Oxford and Cambridge) were represented.⁶ The Council held twelve sessions, and on June 5th the deposition of both pope and anti-pope was pronounced. On June 26th the cardinals (of Benedict's and Gregory's obedience) severally elected as Pope, Pietro Philargi, who assumed the title of Alexander V.

But the Schism was not yet at an end. Though much ingenuity and learning had been expended, the Council had failed to establish beyond question that it possessed the right

¹ Ammirato, iv. 412.

² Creighton, i. 233.

³ This was a change of front, as Florence had congratulated Ladislas on his entry into Rome (Creighton, i. 216).

⁴ Napier, iii. 30.

⁵ He was mockingly called by the peasantry the *Guastagrano* (King Corn-Destroyer).

⁶ It was estimated that 10,000 strangers visited Pisa while the Council was sitting.

of deposition, and its action had not met with universal approval.¹ Nor had it the power of enforcing its decision on the dissentients. Both pope and anti-pope had still followers who regarded the action of the Council as *ultra vires*. It had, therefore, but introduced another disturbing element into ecclesiastical affairs by setting up a third claimant for the papacy. Its impotence soon became apparent. To declare the rival popes schismatics was one thing, but to instal the pope of their choice at Rome and reinvest him with temporal authority was another. A league for this latter purpose was accordingly formed between Florence, Siena, Bologna, and Louis of Anjou, and an army (the bulk of which was Florentine) under Malatesta de' Malatesti was despatched against King Ladislas, who still held the States of the Church. These he had acquired by force, but in order to obtain a better title he had subsequently purchased them of the necessitous Gregory XII. for the absurdly inadequate sum of 25,000 florins. The League had, however, an ulterior object. The growing power of Ladislas was occasioning alarm among the independent Italian States, and the League intended, after dispossessing him of the papal territory, to aid Louis of Anjou in asserting his claim to the crown of Naples. The allied forces had little difficulty in recovering for Alexander V. Cortona, Orvieto, Viterbo, Corneto, and other less important places, and on October 1st they appeared before Rome. They soon gained possession of the Vatican and the castle of S. Angelo, but the city offered a stubborn resistance, and was not taken till January 1st, 1410. On January 5th the Capitol surrendered, and by May 1st the Neapolitan domination was extinguished. Valori's reply to Ladislas proved to have been no idle boast, for the capture of Rome was largely due to Paolo Orsini and his free-lances, who, for higher pay, had transferred their services from the King of Naples to the League. It was a proud day for Florence when she heard that the *Giglio* was floating from the walls of the Eternal City.

Early in the year Pope Alexander had been importuned by the Florentines to proceed to Rome; but this did not accord with the designs of Cardinal Cossa, who went there alone, and soon made himself the most important personage in the Church. Alexander V. was never destined to take up his abode in the Vatican, for he died on May 3rd, and on May 17th the masterful

¹ Creighton, i. 256.

legate of Bologna was elected in his stead. Baldassare Cossa assumed the title of John XXIII., and he at once identified himself with the cause of Louis of Anjou. Florence, however, was desirous of putting an end to the League, as the power of Ladislas was broken for a time, and the costly wars in which she had been engaged during the last twenty years were telling on her finances. Accordingly, with the astuteness that characterised so much of her diplomacy, she accomplished the difficult task of concluding peace with Ladislas without provoking the hostility of John XXIII. Under the terms of the treaty Cortona was ceded to Florence on payment of 60,000 florins.

The treaty with Ladislas came into operation on February 1st, 1411, but it did not long restrain his adventurous spirit. In 1413 his movements once more gave Florence good grounds for alarm. Ever since his elevation to the papacy misfortune had attended John XXIII. He found to his surprise that Cossa the pope was less powerful than Cossa the legate. He was without money or reputation, deserted by his generals, and distrusted by his friends. Under a flimsy pretext, Ladislas violated a compact that he had entered into with the Pope, invaded the papal territory, and recaptured Rome. The Pope fled to Florence, but the Signory, fearing to offend Ladislas, refused to admit him within the city walls, and only allowed him to lodge in the monastery of S. Antonio, outside the Porta San Gallo. The Florentines gained as little as they deserved by this act of inhospitality, as Ladislas collected an army for the invasion of Tuscany. He marched as far as Assisi, and when there Florence concluded a treaty with him, which was obviously but a postponement of approaching danger. Now that Rome had fallen, the only opposition which he had to dread was that of Florence, and it was evident that he was intent on humbling her.¹

But all fear was removed in a few weeks by "one who was always more friendly to Florence than any other friend."² On August 6th, 1414, Ladislas died at Naples, probably from malignant fever; but rumour attributed his death—as it did that of Henry of Luxemburg and Gian-Galeazzo Visconti—to poison, administered by the agents of the Florentine government. These rumours must be rejected for want of evidence; but it is not a little remarkable that on three several occasions,

¹ Creighton, i. 283.

² Machiavelli, p. 150.

when Florence was in imminent peril, Death should have come to her rescue "in the very nick of time."

The death of Ladislas, however, occurred too late to be of service to John XXIII., who, after his expulsion from Rome, feeling the helplessness of his position, obtained a promise of aid from Sigismund, the titular king of the Romans, on condition that another attempt should be made to end the Schism by calling a General Council. The Pope reluctantly consented, and a Council was summoned to meet at Constance. It was opened on November 5th, 1414, and during its session, which lasted three years, it obtained the abdication of Gregory XII., deposed both Benedict XIII. and John XXIII., and on November 11th, 1417, it elected Pope Martin V.¹

During the last quarter of a century Florence had certainly been playing a brilliant rôle. She had thwarted the schemes of two aspirants to the crown of Italy, she had striven to restore unity to the Church, she had added Pisa and Cortona to her dominions, and for a few days the capital of the world had been subject to her troops. But these successes had not rendered her government more stable. They had involved a heavy expenditure, and her citizens were groaning under increased taxation and murmuring at the policy that had occasioned it. As usual, the Florentine mind flew to legislation as the panacea for every ill. In 1411 two new Councils² were established, by which all questions involving peace or war had to be approved by a large majority before they could be even submitted to the existing Councils. Nevertheless before six months had elapsed Florence was involved in a little war with Genoa, and, although it seems to have been constitutionally sanctioned, the Consiglio del Popolo and Consiglio del Comune refused to authorise a loan to be raised for its expenses, so the Signory put a guard at the doors of the council chambers, and kept the members imprisoned until the necessary funds had been voted.

This shameless violation of law evoked some private censure, but no one dared to publicly impeach its authors. The power of the dreaded Albizzi faction was still absolute, although it was usually veiled under constitutional forms. But much dissatisfaction existed, which, though generally latent, sometimes

¹ He belonged to the great Roman house of Colonna.

² They were called "The One Hundred and Thirty-one" and "The Two Hundred."

manifested itself in plots for the overthrow of the oligarchy who ruled the State.¹ No less than three such plots were discovered about this time and put down with a high hand. One of them led to the virtual extinction of the great house of Alberti, every member of which was exiled.

The spirit of insubordination was thus checked for a time, and during the next five years (1412-1416) Florence enjoyed an unwonted immunity from civil discord. Nor was she disturbed by wars or rumours of wars. Ladislas was dead; John XXIII. was, much against his will, fully occupied at Constance; and the Visconti dynasty, though rapidly regaining power, was not yet strong enough to menace Tuscany. The years 1415 and 1416 may be taken as among the most tranquil and prosperous in the history of Florence. But her prosperity was roughly ended in 1417 by the appearance of the plague, which carried off 16,000 of her inhabitants.

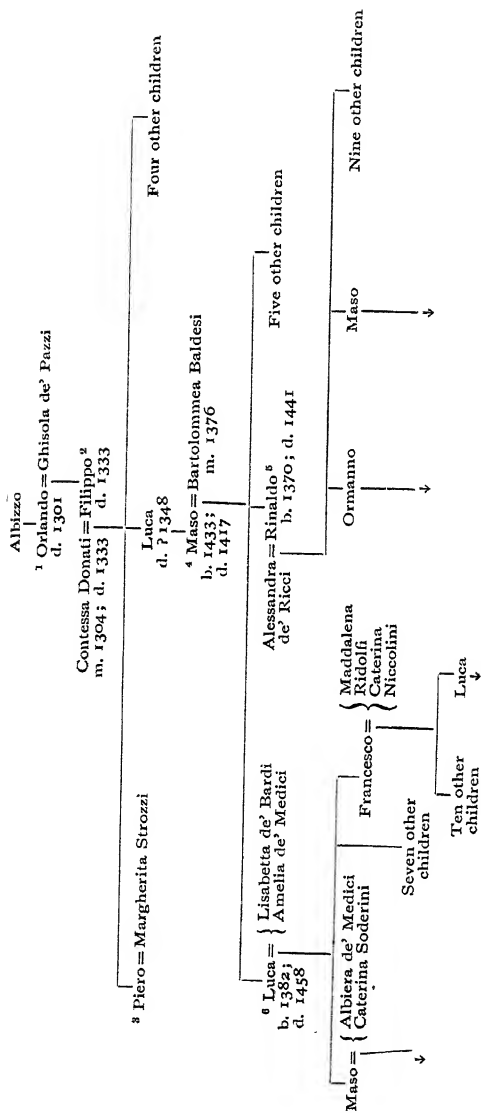
Old Maso, the head of the great house of Albizzi, the despotic leader of the Guelph aristocrats, and one of Florence's wealthiest citizens, died in this year, but whether from the plague or from old age is uncertain.² His life had been a strangely chequered one. In his early manhood he had been driven into exile, and had seen the execution of his uncle Piero and the destruction of the family mansion. But he returned to Florence after the revolution of 1382, and ever since Fortune had smiled on him. His influence steadily increased until he became, as has been seen, almost an uncrowned king.

With all their faults, these old Guelph leaders, of whom Maso degli Albizzi was an illustrious example, are deserving of some admiration. Their rule was at times as tyrannous as that of any despot. They were entirely without scruple as to the means by which they maintained their authority. They were merciless in their treatment of vanquished rivals. They often misused constitutional forms for the gratification of ambition or revenge. But withal they laboured unceasingly for what they believed to be the good of the State, and the glorious position which Florence occupies in the pages of European history is largely due to their energy and foresight.³

¹ It comprised Maso degli Albizzi, Niccolò da Uzzano, Bartolommeo Valori, Nerone Dietisalvi, Neri and Gino Capponi, and Lapo Niccolini (Napier iii. 48).

² Ammirato, v. 46.

³ Giovanni Morelli (*Ricordi*, p. 73) questions the patriotism of the Albizzi faction, alleging that they promoted war for private gain. This may be true of a few individuals, but not of the party generally.



- ¹ One of the Anziani 1255 and 1258. Prior, 1284 1286, 1288, 1291, 1296.
² Prior, 1317; Gonfaloniere, 1327.
³ Prior, 1349, 1350. One of the triumvirate with Lapo Castiglione and Carlo Strozzi, 1357-1360. Executed December 23, 1370.
⁴ Leader of the *Parte Guelfa*.
⁵ Cosimo de' Medici's most influential opponent. Rinaldo was banished in 1434 and never returned to Florence.
⁶ He opposed his brother Rinaldo's attempt to resist with force the government that recalled Cosimo de' Medici in 1434.

In the same year that Maso degli Albizzi died Martin V. was elected Pope. The Council of Constance was as powerless to improve his temporal position as was the Council of Pisa to improve that of Alexander V. Rome was held by Francesco Sforza for Joanna II. of Naples, and the new Pope was homeless. The Signory, thinking no doubt that they would thereby earn his gratitude, which under altered circumstances might become valuable, invited him, when the Council was ended, to take up his abode in Florence. The invitation was accepted, and Pope Martin arrived at the monastery of San Salvi,¹ about a mile outside the Porte S. Croce, on February 25th, 1419. On the following day² he was escorted into Florence, mounted on a white palfrey, with much pomp, by all the chief officers of the State, accompanied by a long procession of cardinals, nobles, representatives of the *Arti*, and others, all in magnificent attire. After taking part in a ceremony at the Cathedral he proceeded to the monastery of S. Maria Novella, where apartments had been prepared for his reception at a cost of 1,500 florins.

The most important incident that occurred during his stay in Florence was the arrival of Baldassare Cossa, the deposed Pope John XXIII. After his flight from Constance, Cossa had been imprisoned, and about this time he was in the custody of Louis of Bavaria. He was nevertheless an object of dread to Martin, who desired to get him into his hands. So the Florentines, in the interests of peace and wishing to please Martin, arranged the matter. Giovanni de' Medici and Niccolò da Uzzano, who had been on friendly terms with Cossa when legate of Bologna, having obtained a promise from the Pope that he would deal gently with Cossa, furnished 38,000 ducats for his ransom and obtained his release. It needed much persuasion to induce Cossa to entrust himself to the mercy of Pope Martin, but the confidence inspired by his friends' assurances was not misplaced. On June 27th he made a humble submission to Martin V. in full consistory, which was graciously received, and the Pope placed a cardinal's hat on his head.³ His misfortunes aroused pity, and he was treated with kindness.⁴ But he did not long enjoy the hospitality of the Florentines, as he died on December 22nd, 1419, six months after his arrival. A tomb of exceptional beauty in the Baptistery at Florence, executed by Donatello and Michelozzo,

¹ The place where Corso Donati met with his death.

² Ammirato, v. 51.

³ Creighton, ii. 9.

⁴ Ammirato, v. 53.

was erected by his friends to his memory. It bears the simple inscription "Johannes quondam Papa XXIII., obit Florentiæ."

Another incident, trifling in itself, but not without serious consequences, occurred in the year 1420. Andrea Braccio da Montone, more generally known as Braccio de' Fortebracci, an adventurous *condottiere*, who had recently made himself lord of his native city of Perugia, had taken advantage of the confusion that prevailed in Rome, while the Council of Constance was sitting, to seize the government of that city. He had been forced to abandon it by his great rival Francesco Sforza, but he was now engaged in attempting its recovery. Before Martin V. could enter Rome it was necessary that Braccio should be conciliated, and for that object he was invited to Florence. He made his entry into the city with an escort of four hundred horsemen, gleaming in gold and silver armour and mounted on richly caparisoned steeds. The pageant-loving Florentines were greatly impressed with the grandeur of the spectacle, and received him with enthusiastic acclamation. To their practical minds the successful warrior was more deserving of honour than the landless pope, and they were imprudent enough not to conceal their opinion. The popular feeling found expression in a doggerel rhyme which was sung by the Florentine *gamins*, and which unfortunately reached the Pope's ears:—

"Braccio valente
Vince ogni gente ;
Il Papa Martino
Non vale un quattrino."¹

The Pope made no secret of his displeasure, which all the tact and eloquence of Leonardo Bruni, the learned Florentine Secretary, was unable to remove. With a pettiness unworthy of the great house of Colonna, Martin allowed this paltry impertinence to rankle in his mind, and it influenced his conduct towards Florence for some years to come. But on his departure on September 9th, 1420, he thought it advisable to disguise his ill-will, and he converted the bishopric of Florence into an archbishopric.

An impetus was given to the trade of Florence about this time by the acquisition of Leghorn, which was purchased from

¹ "Brave Braccio conquers every state; Pope Martin is not worth a farthing." Another version is *un lupino* (a bean) for *un quattrino* (Gino Capponi, ii. 138).

the Genoese for the sum of 100,000 florins. The number of Florentine merchant ships was increased, a direct trade with Alexandria was opened, and a Board called "The Six Consuls of the Sea" was established and ordered to reside at Pisa.

And yet another trivial event must be noticed, for it was destined to have a portentous influence on Florence in the not very distant future. This was the election of Giovanni de' Medici,¹ in the year 1421, to the post of gonfalonier. The election did not take place without opposition. Ever since the days of the Ciompi riots, when Salvestro de' Medici had successfully led the people to revolt against the Guelph oligarchy, no member of the family had been allowed to hold office in the State. It was now urged by Niccolò da Uzzano, who since the death of Maso degli Albizzi had become the foremost man in Florence,² that the family of Medici were so powerful in consequence of their enormous wealth and great popularity, that it would be unsafe to allow them any share in the government, lest they should revenge themselves on those who had excluded them from office during the past forty-three years. He insisted that Giovanni was a far abler man than Salvestro, and pointed out that it was easy to nip an evil in the bud, but difficult to remove it when full blown. But the sage counsel of Niccolò (possibly because some of his party were jealous of his influence) was disregarded.³ Had it been adopted, and persistently acted on, the growing power of the house of the Medici might have been repressed and the whole drift of Florentine history altered.

So Giovanni was chosen Gonfalonier of Justice and the Medici family was launched on its upward course. He had two sons then living—Cosimo and Lorenzo. The former (hereafter to be known as *Pater Patriæ*) became the grandfather of Lorenzo the Magnificent and the great-grandfather of two popes; and the latter was the ancestor of the line of Grand Dukes who reigned in Florence from 1573 to 1737.

The repose which Florence had been enjoying was now at an end. In the previous year (1420) a little cloud had showed itself on the political horizon, which, as many a long-headed Florentine

¹ See Pedigree of the Medici, *ante*, p. 114.

² Maso's son Rinaldo doubtless regarded the leadership of the aristocratic party as his by inheritance, and resented the influential position which Niccolò's age and experience gave him. This is probably the explanation of the divisions among the party which certainly existed at this time.

³ Ammirato, v. 67.

knew, boded a coming storm. It came in the form of an embassy from Filippo-Maria Visconti, desiring a formal ratification of a peace, which had been tacitly maintained between himself and Florence almost since the death of Galeazzo Maria. For many years he had been actively engaged in repairing the fortunes of the Visconti family, of which he was now sole representative. By a cautious and thoroughly unscrupulous policy, aided by his wife's dowry and the military talent of the great *condottiere* Francesco Carmagnuola, he had succeeded in recovering almost the whole of the Lombard portion of his father's principality. He was now turning his attention to Genoa, and before taking active steps for its acquisition he desired to secure the neutrality of Florence. His designs were clear enough to Gino Capponi, Niccolò da Uzzano, and other experienced statesmen, who strenuously exhorted the Signory not to allow their hands to be tied while Filippo was extending his territory. Their eloquence was, however, unheeded, a treaty between the Republic and Filippo-Maria was concluded, and before the end of the year he had added Genoa and Brescia to his dominions. It was abundantly clear that he was playing the same game as his father, and the Signory now realising that, in spite of the treaty, war was not far off, engaged the services of the *condottiere* Andrea Braccio da Montone, whose reputation was now at its height.

In the following year the eyes of the blindest must have been opened when the news arrived that Filippo-Maria had possessed himself of Forlì.¹ The position of the government was nevertheless a difficult one, as there was a powerful peace party, headed by Giovanni de' Medici; and Pope Martin V. (who had not forgotten the doggerel verse) sided with Visconti. But the war party carried the day, and the Signory, having appointed the two Boards known as the "Ten of War" and the "Ten of Peace," an army under Pandolfo Malatesta was despatched for the recovery of Forlì.² The second campaign against the Visconti was, in many respects, a counterpart of the first. Once more the Florentines met with terrible reverses, but once more they were able for a time to check the progress of the Milanese forces.

¹ The Florentines had a special interest in Forlì, as its lords, the Ordelaffi, had made themselves *raccomandati*, i.e. had placed themselves under the protection of Florence.

² The curious law providing for the appointment, in the event of war, of these two Boards was passed in 1415. The functions of the former are obvious, but what were those of the latter is unknown (Trollope, ii. 420).

And once more success ultimately attended their efforts through the tardy awakening of Venice to a sense of her own danger.

In 1423 Imola was taken by Visconti; the Florentine forces were vanquished in 1424 at Zagonara, in 1425 at Valdilamone, in 1426 at Anghiari, and in the same year they sustained the most crushing defeat at Faggiuola. Many of these disasters arose from the foolish interference by the "Ten of War" with the plans of their generals. The dismay in Florence, after the reverse at Zagonara, was enhanced by the fall of one of the porphyry columns outside the Baptistery,¹ which the populace regarded as an omen boding extraordinary evil; and the panic after the battle of Faggiuola occasioned a financial crisis, which involved the failure of eight great mercantile firms, including that of Palla Strozzi. Then it was that Venice entered into an alliance with Florence and the tide of fortune at once turned. Within a few months Filippo-Maria was constrained to conclude a treaty of peace (Dec. 30th, 1426) under which Brescia was ceded to Milan and Florence acquired some valuable mercantile privileges.

But, as all the world knew, the word of Visconti was worthless, and having gained a breathing-space, he resumed the war in the following year. This campaign was terminated in October by a battle fought near Cremona, and Visconti concluded a peace on terms still more humiliating than those of the previous year.

These two wars had cost Florence 3,500,000 florins,² but in the opinion of many it had not been money thrown away. But for her action, it is probable that Italy would have become united under a single ruler. It is idle to speculate whether or not she had been in truth a national benefactor. It may be, that if the numerous states into which the peninsula was divided had then been consolidated, Italy would have escaped the foreign invasions and enslavement, from which she suffered during succeeding centuries, and from which she has only recently emerged. But it must be remembered that Patriotism in its fullest sense³ was almost unknown in Italy at this time, and it is impossible to withhold our admiration of Florence for the gallantry with which she preserved her independence.

There were, however, a large number of Florentines, especially among the lower orders, with whom the war was unpopular,

¹ See *ante*, p. 12.

² Gino Capponi, ii. 178.

³ As it had been previously understood by Dante and as it was subsequently understood by Machiavelli.

and who, towards its close, were murmuring loudly at the increased burden of taxation that it had entailed. But their grievance was not so much at the amount of taxes that they were called upon to pay, as the iniquitous system by which they were levied. Until 1336 no difficulties had been experienced by the government in raising money, for while the ordinary expenditure of the commune was some 40,000 florins, its revenue had reached 300,000. The surplus, when not required for war or other extraordinary expenditure, was employed in the erection of magnificent public buildings or in making provision against famines. The revenue was up to this date raised entirely by customs and duties on contracts called *gabelle*.

But, in 1336, the expenses of the war with Mastino della Scala (which cost 600,000 florins) could not be met by means of the *gabelle*, and recourse was had to a new system. A national debt was created which was raised by forced loans, called *Prestanze*,¹ and thenceforth all extraordinary expenditure was defrayed by this means. The distribution of this impost among the several classes was a matter of much difficulty, and was one of the chief causes of discontent among the lower orders. When a *Prestanza* was about to be demanded, seven assessments of the amount which each individual ought, having regard to his supposed means, to pay, were made independently. These assessments were then compared, the two highest and two lowest were rejected, and the sums appearing in the remaining three were averaged. The very poor were exempt, but every other individual was required to pay the amount thus arrived at by a certain day, and if he failed to do so, his name was entered in a book called the *specchio* (looking-glass). Such an entry carried with it various penalties, chief among which was disqualification for any public office, and forfeiture of all right to obtain redress for any wrong in a court of justice.² Thus a citizen who did not possess what was called *nettezza di specchio* was precluded from taking part in public life, and a citizen who possessed it was said to be *netto di specchio* (i.e. clear of the black list). If a citizen who was drawn for office was not *netto di specchio*, the paper bearing his name was torn up (*stracciato*), and hence all such were called *stracciati*. The *specchio* was an invention of Benedetto degli Alberti, and was

¹ Said to be derived from *Præstadium*.

² Any purchaser of property from one whose name was on the *specchio* became liable for all arrears of taxes due from the vendor.

a device to make the *grandi* pay their taxes for very shame, as in his day they did not fraudulently evade payment of a portion, but insolently refused to pay all that was due. In 1421 the Albizzi faction procured the passing of a law enacting that the names of all who had failed to pay their share of the *prestanze*, should be placed on the *specchio*, which thus became an instrument in their hands for repressing the *popolo minuto*. They were, however, soon hoist with their own petard, for the rich members of the popular party paid up all arrears of taxation due from their friends or those whose support they desired, and thus restored to them their political privileges. Both Giovanni de' Medici and his son Cosimo largely augmented their influence and popularity by this means. It was no doubt the intention of those, who framed this elaborate system of levying *Prestanze*, that it should effect a fair distribution of the public burdens, but it had been administered by the upper classes in their own interests.

The people had from time to time repeatedly demanded new and more equitable valuation lists, and this had been one of the demands of the *Ciompì*. The unjust exoneration of the rich from their due share of taxation became more apparent, as the inequality in the distribution of wealth increased, and it became intolerable when the wars with the Visconti necessitated the raising of *Prestanze* of unprecedented amounts. Although at the time of which we are speaking (1426) the *grandi* contributed to the exchequer amounts which were glaringly inadequate, they had the impudence to defend an abuse by which they so largely profited. They alleged with some plausibility, that those who neglected private for public business ought not to be expected to contribute, in the same proportion, as those who devoted their whole time to their own concerns. The people answered, with force and irony, that they had not noticed that the fortunes of the wealthy office-bearers had suffered through neglect of their private affairs, and there were plenty of citizens willing to relieve them of their public duties. It appears, at first sight, surprising that the people should have submitted to so manifest an injustice without an appeal to force, but it did not press so severely on the operatives, who were ever ready to fly to arms, as on the shopkeepers and small traders, on whom riot or insurrection might have brought heavy losses.

The demands for a removal of the abuse, however, became so menacing after the last Milanese war, that the next *Prestanza*

was levied more equitably than heretofore. Though this act of justice was tardy, the indignation of the aristocratic party was great, and some of them not only refused to pay the amounts in which they had been assessed, but treated the collectors with violence. Consequently the government gave orders that the collection should be made by force—a direction which nearly provoked civil strife, “it being impossible for great men, accustomed to be treated with respect, to endure to have hands laid upon them,” as Machiavelli naively remarks.¹ That such an order should have been given is significant. It shows that old Niccolò da Uzzano’s advice to his friends, when he urged them to prevent Giovanni de’ Medici’s election as gonfalonier, was, from a party point of view, sound. The Albizzi faction had been over-confident and had relaxed their efforts to exclude opponents from office, in consequence of which the popular party, under Medicean guidance, had obtained a strong foothold in the government.

It now became clear to the aristocracy that some decisive step must be taken, or their power would be at an end. Accordingly, when their position was strengthened by the election of a friend, Lorenzo Ridolfi, to the office of gonfalonier, seventy of their leading members assembled in the church of Santo Stefano to discuss the situation. The proceedings were opened by Rinaldo degli Albizzi. Calvalcanti puts into his mouth a speech which extends over fifteen pages, and breathes a spirit of unmitigated contempt for the classes beneath him.² After reviewing the history of Florence during the past forty years, he is made to lament the dissensions in his party, and to implore his hearers to sink all differences of opinion, which had been the root of the present mischief. The remedy he suggested was that the *Arti Minori* should be reduced in number from fourteen to seven, and that the share in the government held by the suppressed guilds should be handed over to the *Arti Maggiori* and persons of independent means (*scioperati*). On the pretence of a secret expedition he said the city might be occupied by 2,000 or 3,000 infantry, and the necessary reforms voted “under cover of the sword.” By such means “these hawkers may be

¹ Machiavelli, p. 158. Nor has Ammirato a word of blame for the *grandi* (Trollope, ii. 470).

² In Machiavelli (p. 158) and Ammirato (v. 118) the reports of his speech are much briefer. The language there attributed to him is more moderate. All these reports are probably fictitious.

dismissed to their peddling, and gain a living for their families by a total exclusion from public honours."¹ The speech met with unanimous approval, but Niccolò da Uzzano urged that Rinaldo's proposal could not possibly be carried out without the concurrence of Giovanni de' Medici. The meeting finally adopted Niccolò's counsel, and Rinaldo was deputed to approach Giovanni on the matter. He endeavoured to persuade Giovanni that unless he separated himself from the popular party its insolence would be the ruin of the city and the government.² But Giovanni was not to be cajoled by Rinaldo's specious arguments. Whatever were his motives, his conduct was in accordance with the dictates of justice and common sense. He urged on Rinaldo that the resolution passed at the Santo Stefano meeting could only lead to mischief; that nothing was more injurious to a state than violent constitutional changes; that the present government was strong enough to repress all disorder; and he cautioned Rinaldo to take warning by the example of Benedetto degli Alberti. He maintained that an unjust system of taxation was the cause of the present discontent, and he promised to remedy the evil. When the aristocratic party found that Giovanni de' Medici was not to be won over they prudently abandoned Rinaldo's project; but they determined to humble the Medici family, for though they did not distrust Giovanni they feared his more ambitious son Cosimo. They made an unsuccessful attempt to oust from the office of Chancellor one Martino Martini, who was a loyal supporter of the Medici, and disorders would probably have followed had not the recent defeats of the army occupied public attention.³ Giovanni was urged by his party (as his relatives Vieri and Salvestro de' Medici had been before him) to take the government of the State into his own hands, but he declined their overtures as decidedly as he had done those of Rinaldo degli Albizzi.

The resolution passed at the Santo Stefano meeting defeated its own end, for when it became known it not only rendered the Albizzi faction more unpopular than they were before, but Giovanni's opposition to it so increased his influence that he

¹ From a passage in his speech, as given by Cavalcanti, it seems that the remnant of the old nobility who were living in Florence were still disfranchised.

² Machiavelli, 159.

³ *Ibid.*, 160.

was enabled to remodel the system of levying forced loans without difficulty.¹

The new system of taxation now introduced was known as the *Catasto*,² from the book in which the names of all the taxpayers, with a description and value of the property owned by each, were entered. After the name of each person was added his age, profession or trade, state of health, and the number of his family. If he was in business the value of his stock-in-trade, book debts, and liabilities were also recorded. In assessing the amount on which each individual was to be taxed, many deductions were made from the gross value of his property, such as rent, keep of horses, and 200 florins of capital for every person whom he was bound to maintain. The sum thus arrived at was charged with half a florin on every 100 florins, and the amount so levied was called a *decima*, because it represented one-tenth of the income which the rateable property of an individual would yield him at five per cent.³ Every citizen was required to make a complete return of his possessions, and any property fraudulently omitted from such return was liable to confiscation.⁴ The assessments were subject to a triennial revision, and no one could be excused payment of any part of the sum due from him under the list, for the time being in force, without the sanction of the Grand Council.

The *Catasto* worked smoothly, and it was a great boon to the large majority of citizens. There is no doubt that it still further increased the popularity of the Medici family. Perhaps, however, the facilities with which taxes⁵ were levied under it were too great, for the *decima* soon came to be regarded as the unit of taxation, and as much as fifty per cent. of income was once paid in eleven months. Between 1427 and 1430 the loans thus raised amounted to 1,459,000 florins, and between 1430 and 1453 no less than 4,875,000 florins were collected from seventy-

¹ The new system was devised by Filippo Ghiacceteo (Napier, iii. 125), but it was probably passed by Giovanni de' Medici's influence (Machiavelli, p. 162). See, however, Gino Capponi, ii. 179.

² From *Accatastare*, to heap together or collect.

³ Napier, iii. 127; Trollope, ii. 482. Both these authors derive their information from Pagnini's treatise *Della Decima*.

⁴ The return was made to a Board of Ten, whose duties were somewhat analogous to those of our Income Tax Commissioners.

⁵ The moneys raised under the *Catasto* I have spoken of as "taxes," because they were compulsory payments; but it should be remembered that they bore interest and were repayable. None the less they were very burdensome (Pagnini's *Della Decima*, 1765, i. 33, 34).

seven families alone. This enormous drain on the finances of the community soon told on its prosperity, for the moneys so raised were taken from trade, where they yielded a much higher rate of interest than that paid by the government.¹

On February 20th, 1429, Giovanni de' Medici died. When on his deathbed he is reported to have made a set oration to his two sons, Cosimo and Lorenzo, containing many sage counsels, which has been accepted as genuine by many historians, but it does not strike on the modern ear with a ring of truth.²

It is not a little remarkable how strongly the Medici family seem to have possessed a power of attraction and repulsion, which has not lost its effect even in modern times. Consequently very opposite estimates of their characters were formed by contemporary historians, and but few recent authors write of them in a judicial spirit.³ Nor was Giovanni, who may be regarded as the real founder of his family's greatness, any exception. According to Cavalcanti, Machiavelli, and Ammirato, he was large-hearted and large-minded, courteous, generous, and charitable in every sense of the word, for he aided the rich when in misfortune as well as the poor, and he dispensed his alms with a delicate consideration for the feelings of those whom he relieved. He commended the virtuous, but he was compassionate to the erring. He was not eloquent, but he was possessed of a fund of common sense. He held aloof from political intrigues, and though he never sought for office or public honours, they were thrust upon him. But Bruto⁴ and Tinucci,⁵ on the other hand, ascribe his every action to a subtle and deep-laid design to elevate his family by insidiously undermining the freedom of the State, and maintain that his virtues were all assumed for the same purpose. Had it been alleged that personal aggrandisement was his aim, there would have been more to have been said for the theory that he was an arch-dissimulator. But his own popularity he could not transmit to his descendants. It may be suggested that he intended to teach his children how to rise by

¹ Pagnini's *Della Decima* (1765), i. 33. The system of raising moneys for ordinary expenditure by *Gabelle*, and for extraordinary expenditure by the *Catasso*, remained in force till 1494. In 1495 the *decima* was converted into a property tax, which was not repayable.

² The speech is given at length by Cavalcanti (*vide* Napier, iii. 136), by Ammirato (vol. v. p. 145), and in an abridged form by Machiavelli (p. 164).

³ To Roscoe they are angels, while to Sismondi and Perrens every Medici is a devil.

⁴ *Storia Fiorentina*, lib. i. p. 25.

⁵ *Confessione*. Cited by Napier, iii. 138.

his own example. If so he was teaching them no ignoble lesson, for the power which he had legitimately acquired he ever used to moderate party passions, which had for centuries been the bane of Florentine politics. There is, indeed, no tittle of evidence that he curtailed or endangered the freedom of the State. On the contrary, he freed the poor from unjust taxation, and he curbed the power of the Albizzi faction, who had ever shown themselves the real enemies of liberty. It is strong testimony to his integrity and disinterestedness that his old political rival Niccolò da Uzzano spoke of him after his death with unstinted admiration.

Giovanni de' Medici was buried in the church of San Lorenzo, which, after its destruction by fire in 1417, had been rebuilt at his expense. Had he lived but a few years longer it is probable that the west front would not have remained in its present unsightly condition.

CHAPTER XII

1429-1434

THE EXILE AND RECALL OF COSIMO DE' MEDICI—ART AND
LITERATURE (1406-1434)

COSIMO DE' MEDICI, Giovanni's eldest son, now becomes the chief centre of interest, and for thirty out of the next thirty-five years Florentine history is inseparably connected with the story of his life. In sagacity he was perhaps his father's equal, but he had not, at least at this time, his father's caution, and he had throughout his life more than his father's ambition. His career, in consequence, was more chequered and more brilliant. Political life in Florence was still distracted by passion and intrigue, but the old party names, Guelph, Ghibelline, *Grandi*, *Popolo grasso*, *Popolo minuto* were disappearing. The city was now divided into two factions, the one aristocratic and the other democratic. But the popular party included some wealthy families, such as the Medici, as well as members of the aristocracy who for some personal reasons had separated themselves from their relations. As we have seen, the aristocratic party was led by Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Niccolò da Uzzano—two men of very opposite temperaments—while Cosimo de' Medici found himself, by a process of natural selection, the leader of the people. His two chief advisers were his headstrong cousin Averardo, and Puccio Pucci, a man of humble birth, but of great ability. For a brief space these two parties became partially fused by a common object, which indirectly arose out of an insurrection at Volterra where the unpopularity of the *catasto* had occasioned an attempt to throw off the Florentine yoke.¹ A little army was despatched to enforce obedience under the command of Niccolò Fortebraccio, a nephew of Andrea Braccio,

¹ The extension of the *catasto* to the dependencies of Florence, in spite of Giovanni de' Medici's opposition, had been carried by Niccolò da Uzzano and his party, who desired to make it unpopular.

and Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Palla Strozzi were sent with him as commissioners.¹ The revolt was easily suppressed, and would have been hardly worth mention but for a collateral consequence. Fortebraccio and Rinaldo were thrown much together while military operations were going on outside Volterra, and during this companionship they hatched between them a scheme for the conquest of Lucca.² They had, no doubt, different ends in view. Fortebraccio desired only employment for his troop; Rinaldo hoped that if this coveted addition to Florentine territory was effected by his instrumentality, he would become so popular that he would be able to make himself lord of his native city. Accordingly, on the flimsy pretext of a debt due to his late uncle Andrea, Fortebraccio crossed the Lucchese border, captured two castles, and committed other acts of hostility. Events turned out as Rinaldo anticipated. The news of Fortebraccio's successes reawakened in the Florentines a desire to possess themselves of Lucca, and the very party who had been advocating peace for some forty years were now clamouring for war as loudly as Rinaldo and his followers. There was, however, a small but thoughtful minority of the old war party, who counselled peace. At the head of these was Niccolò da Uzzano, who urged, before an assembly of the three Councils, that an attack on the friendly city of Lucca would not only be unjust, but would probably involve Florence in another costly war with Milan. His words of wisdom were, however, disregarded, and the proposal for war was carried by a large majority. Fortebraccio was appointed commander of the Florentine army, and Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Astorre Gianni were named as commissioners.

The war brought on Florence nothing but discredit and disaster. Before long both commissioners were superseded. Gianni was recalled for his treacherous and cruel treatment of the peaceable inhabitants of the fertile valley of Serravezza, and Rinaldo, on being accused of having managed the war so as "to fill his own pastures with other people's cattle and furnish his own houses with other people's goods," threw up his commission.³ Whether the charge was true or trumped up by his enemies to do him

¹ Ammirato, v. 151. Trollope, without stating his authority, gives the name of Niccolò da Uzzano in lieu of that of Palla Strozzi.

² Machiavelli, p. 156.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

an injury it is impossible to say. He was an avaricious man, but he was playing for a higher prize than wealth.¹

After the siege had been carried on unsuccessfully for many months, a childish attempt was made to flood the city by diverting the waters of the river Serchio. Its execution was entrusted to the great architect Filippo Brunelleschi, whose reputation will hardly be enhanced from having countenanced a scheme, which cost the Republic 40,000 florins, and not only failed to effect its object, but drowned the Florentine army out of their camp.

The war languished on into the summer of 1430 without any result, save a drain on the Florentine finances. So great was the scarcity of money, that the government permitted Jews to take up their residence in Florence, and to receive twenty per cent. for loans. And now that happened which Niccolò da Uzzano had predicted. Francesco Sforza, acting under secret instructions from Filippo-Maria Visconti, marched to Lucca at the head of his troop, and compelled the Florentines to raise the siege. He was soon bribed to withdraw, and the siege was renewed, but Filippo-Maria contrived to furnish Lucca with covert aid. At the end of the year, however, he threw off the mask of neutrality, whereupon Florence and Venice declared war against him for breach of his undertaking not to meddle with Tuscan affairs.

Throughout 1432 an indecisive war was waged between the allied forces and the Duke of Milan, in Tuscany, in Lombardy, and, at sea, near the shores of Genoa.² At last, by the intervention of Pope Eugenius IV. (who had succeeded Florence's old enemy Martin V. in 1431), the contending parties agreed to put an end to the struggle. Peace was concluded on May 10th, 1433, and as usual Venice was the only one of the contracting parties who secured any substantial advantage. Florence gained nothing, while she had enormously added to her indebtedness. Had her losses, however, been even greater than they were, she would have deserved no commiseration. Without a shadow of pretext

¹ According to Bruto and Tinucci, Rinaldo was conducting the war successfully, and his resignation was the result of Medicean intrigue (Napier, iii. 152), but both of these historians are untrustworthy when speaking of the Medici (Sismondi, viii. 293, note). Both represent Cosimo de' Medici as playing a very despicable game at this time, but Gino Capponi (vol. ii. p. 207) rejects their stories. Bruto repeated the gossip of the Florentine exiles at Lyons, where he was living.

² The Venetian forces were commanded by Carmagnuola, whose fidelity was again suspected. He was summoned to Venice and executed as a traitor on May 1st, 1432.

she had made war on a friendly state, and its conduct had been characterised by incompetence, inhumanity, and treachery.

Meanwhile the domestic affairs of Florence were far from satisfactory. The truce between the two factions which existed at the opening of the war was of short duration, and before its close party spirit was as virulent as ever. The military experience of the aristocratic party necessarily threw the chief conduct of the war into their hands, and this was in itself a cause of offence to their opponents. There were unquestionably solid grounds for impugning the management of the war, and the leaders of the popular party would have had a good case had they contented themselves with exposing the mistakes and misconduct of the executive, but they "artfully and assiduously calumniated" those in authority; "they exaggerated what was true, they invented what was false, and charges true and false were believed by the people who hated those against whom they were made."¹ These malignant proceedings Machiavelli attributes to Averardo de' Medici, and he expressly exonerates Cosimo. But it was Cosimo and not Averardo with whom the aristocracy were exasperated, and whose ruin they set themselves to compass. They privately sought the advice of Niccolò da Uzzano as to how they could best effect their object, but he viewed their design with disfavour, and it was for a time relinquished.²

Not long afterwards Niccolò da Uzzano died, and Florence lost one of the wisest and most upright statesmen that she had ever possessed. Amid all the intrigues and petty rivalries which form so large a part of Florentine history, it is refreshing to meet with a leading citizen who was almost invariably actuated by disinterested motives. He took a large and sane view of every situation. The soundness of his judgment had given him a vast influence, which he always used in opposing unjust wars and in controlling party passions. Even nobles who did not recognise him as their leader feared to take a decided

¹ Machiavelli, p. 175.

² As is his wont, Machiavelli purports to put into the mouth of Uzzano the words he used. The gist of the speech attributed to him is that the nobles were divided while the populace were united, and that in a trial of strength the latter would win; that the belief that Cosimo aimed at the sovereignty of the city rested only on suspicion; that if he were banished his friends would never rest till they had effected his recall; and if he were put to death Florence would be in danger of having Rinaldo degli Albizzi as a despot. If either was to prevail he preferred Cosimo, but he added, "God deliver this city from private usurpation" (Machiavelli, pp. 175, 177).

step without his sanction. Had Florence had more such citizens her history would have been very different.¹

The year after Niccolò da Uzzano's death, which occurred in 1432, the war with Visconti came to an end, and the nobles were thus relieved at the same time from Niccolò's restraining influence and from military duties. Rinaldo degli Albizzi was now sole leader of his party and could proceed on his ambitious course unimpeded. He and his followers at once devoted all their energies to accomplish Cosimo's downfall. They promulgated a report that he intended to make himself lord of Florence; they tampered with the elections; they corruptly used the *Specchio*; and by these and other means they filled the government offices with their adherents. For six months the city was distracted by plots and counter-plots, and there was not a magistrate who did his duty.²

At length the time arrived when it seemed to those, who were conspiring for the overthrow of the constitution and the ruin of Cosimo, that a blow could be struck with fatal effect. On September 1st, 1433, Bernardo Guadagni, whose arrears of taxes had been paid by Rinaldo in order to qualify him for office, and who professed his willingness to do Rinaldo's bidding, was elected Gonfalonier of Justice. Cosimo was immediately requested to return to Florence from the Mugello (where he had been residing to escape from party strife), on the plea that it was desired that he should serve on an important committee which was to be appointed to discuss affairs of State. On September 4th he returned, and on September 7th he was summoned to the Palazzo to attend a meeting of this committee. The suspicions of his friends were aroused, and they endeavoured to dissuade him from attending, but Cosimo, conscious of his own innocence, would not disobey the summons.³ He went to the council chamber, and while conversing with some acquaintances he was suddenly arrested, and without the pretence of a trial or even any formal charge, he was thrown into prison. He was confined in the small stone cell half-way up the tower of the Palazzo

¹ He lived in the palace in the Oltrarno now known as the Palazzo Capponi. His only daughter Ginevra married a Capponi. There is a bust in terra cotta of Niccolò da Uzzano by Donatello in the Bargello.

² Machiavelli, p. 178.

³ This is the account given by Cosimo himself (Gino Capponi, ii. 212; Napier, iii. 203). Machiavelli (p. 179) says nothing of the pretence of a committee meeting, but merely states that Cosimo was cited by the Gonfalonier to appear before the Signory, and that he, "relying more on his own innocence than on the mercy of his judges," obeyed the summons.

Vecchio called the Alberghettino or Barberia. Two days later (September 9th) a *Parlamento* was convened in the Piazza della Signoria, and the usual farce was enacted. The square was occupied by an armed body of Rinaldo's dependants, and none but his supporters were allowed to approach the *ringhiera*, from whence a public official thus addressed the people: "O people of Florence, do you believe that there are in this square two-thirds of those entitled to vote?" "Yes, certainly we are two-thirds and more," was the reply. The people were then asked "if they were willing that a *Balla* should be appointed to reform the State," and they shouted "Aye." The *Balla* thus appointed consisted of 200 members, mostly of the Albizzi faction, and though ostensibly created to effect constitutional reforms, its real work was to determine the time and manner of Cosimo's death.¹

The news of Cosimo's arrest caused general consternation among the lower orders, by whom he was greatly beloved, but they made no attempt to rescue him. Their attitude, however, seems to have inspired the aristocratic party with some alarm, for when one, Ser Gino, proclaimed in the streets that he who had succoured the poor was about to be exiled "by those whose abounding wickedness had never failed," no one dared to molest him. But Cosimo's friends were not idle. Niccolò da Tolentino marched at the head of the forces of the Republic to Lastra, and would have entered Florence and speedily have liberated Cosimo had he not, by the ill advice of some of the Medici family, been dissuaded from doing so. Venice sent ambassadors to plead Cosimo's cause, and Niccolò d' Este of Ferrara used his influence for the same object.

Cosimo was doubtless aware of what was taking place, but at first he was apprehensive that his adversaries intended to take his life by poison, and for four days after his arrest he ate nothing but a little bread. But Federigo Malavolti, in whose custody he had been placed, assured him that his life was in no danger, and volunteered to share his meals. Ostensibly to keep up Cosimo's spirits (but probably in order to do him a more substantial service) Malavolti invited one of the gonfalonier's servants, who is said to have been very good company, to join Cosimo

¹ The *Balla* was prohibited from interfering with the *Catasto* or the election bags. With this exception the powers conferred upon it were unlimited.

and himself at supper. Cosimo availed himself of the opportunity thus offered, and sent a bribe of 1,000 florins to the gonfalonier, who it was well known was a needy man, with a request that he would visit him in prison. The visit was paid, and thenceforth Bernardo Guadagni's attitude in Council towards Cosimo became less hostile.

Meanwhile the *Balìa* was not working altogether as Rinaldo wished. The power of Cosimo's friends and of Cosimo's gold was making itself felt among the Two Hundred, and Rinaldo found that he could not count on as many votes as he had expected. It was no doubt the intention of the promoters of the *Balìa* that it should straightway have decreed Cosimo's death, but many of its members demanded his banishment, and many, through fear of the people, refrained from expressing an opinion. It was evident that the judicial murder that had been contemplated was anything but an accomplished fact, so the conspirators attempted to attain their end by other means. Some of them secretly visited Federigo Malavolti, and pressed him either to poison Cosimo himself, or to admit two assassins into his cell who should throw him out of the window, but Malavolti refused to be a party to any such treachery.¹ At length the *Balìa* decided to banish Cosimo to Padua for ten years,² a decision which was probably due to the gonfalonier's influence. Sentence was pronounced on September 29th, and on October 3rd Cosimo was escorted by a bodyguard to the frontier.³ By the same decree his brother Lorenzo was exiled to Venice, and his cousin Averardo to Naples.⁴ All members of the house of Medici who were not banished (except the descendants of Vieri) were disfranchised by enrolment among the *grandi*.⁵ It was

¹ It was Mariotto Baldovinetti who proposed poison.

² Gino Capponi, ii. 216. Ammirato (vol. v. p. 205) says five years, but it seems that the first sentence was banishment for one year, which was extended to five, and finally to ten years.

³ The dictatorial powers of a *Balìa* gave it the right to punish, without trial, any citizen whom it deemed dangerous. Gino Capponi (vol. ii. p. 213) mentions a curious document, whether an official indictment or not is uncertain, in which the faults of the house of Medici from the year 1378, are set out, and in which Cosimo and Averardo are described as "truculent and cruel enemies, the promoters of slaughter, fire, and all manner of devastation, to which they had been prompted by their diabolical nature, and who would not have been tolerated had not the Florentines been singularly benignant."

⁴ On Cosimo's arrest Lorenzo had fled with Cosimo's children to Venice. Ammirato says that Lorenzo was banished for two and Averardo for ten years.

⁵ Not long afterwards Cosimo's adherent, Puccio Pucci, was banished for ten years.

thought that Cosimo's enforced absence from business would have occasioned his bankruptcy, but this was averted by his Venetian friends. The grief that was felt by the people at Cosimo's punishment was mitigated by their joy at the exile of Averardo, who was very unpopular.¹

Cosimo received his sentence very cheerfully, and expressed his desire to be of use to his country wherever he might be required to reside. He was removed by night to the house of the gonfalonier, and was escorted by a guard to the frontier.² His journey to Padua is said to have resembled a triumphal progress. In a short time he was allowed to change his abode to Venice,³ where he was treated more like a sovereign than a refugee. He wrote himself: "It would hardly be believed that having been driven from my house I should find so much honour."

The successful faction at once set to work to strengthen their position. Extraordinary powers were granted to the *capitano del popolo*, and ten citizens, called *Accoppiatori*, were appointed, whose duty it was to refill the election bags and to control the drawings of priors and other officials in the interests of their party.

Notwithstanding all their efforts, the victory of the Albizzi faction was a hollow one, and nobody knew this better than Rinaldo himself. He had been playing for a high stake, and he had lost. The sovereignty of Florence, to which he aspired, was only to be won by Cosimo's death, and Cosimo had escaped. He did not, however, abandon his project without one more struggle. He called his party together, and at a secret meeting he enlarged on the perilous position which they were in, and once more recommended an alliance with the disfranchised nobility and the overthrow of the government by a *coup d'état*. But Rinaldo, with all his eloquence and energy, was not a born leader of men, and was never able to inspire his followers with confidence. Although they were hostile to the Medici, it is more

¹ Napier, iii. 211.

² Rinaldo's son, Ormanno degli Albizzi, was in the Piazza at the head of an armed gang waiting to murder Cosimo as he left the palace.

³ His change of domicile was granted at the request of the Venetian government. He was accompanied to Venice by the rising architect Michelozzo Michelozzi, whom he employed to build there the Biblioteca di San Giorgio (Gino Capponi, ii. 221). This was the first of three expulsions to which the elder branch of Giovanni de' Medici's family was subjected, before Florence passed under the more permanent but less beneficent rule of the younger branch.

than probable that many of them, like old Niccolò da Uzzano, did not at heart regard Rinaldo as a more desirable despot than Cosimo. Rinaldo's proposal was opposed by Mariotto Baldovinetti (the very man who had attempted to compass Cosimo's death by poison), who boldly alleged that he preferred the unknown dangers of a democracy to the known dangers of a government by the nobles.¹ In consequence of divided counsels no step was taken by Rinaldo's party, but it was evident that the *status quo* could not be maintained. It was known from an intercepted letter, written to Cosimo by Agnolo Acciaiuoli, that the Medici and their friends were busily intriguing for Cosimo's return.² Florence, Venice, and the pope were again at war with the Duke of Milan, and the people were groaning under the imposition of forced loans. The unpopularity of the aristocratic party was thus increased, and the desire for the recall of Cosimo intensified, for had he been at home many a needy citizen would have been saved from the disgrace of having his name placed on the *Specchio*. Hence, notwithstanding all the efforts of the Albizzi party, in September, 1434, a gonfalonier and Signory almost entirely favourable to the Medicean interest were elected. This brought matters to a crisis. Rinaldo called his followers together and proposed that before the new government came into office (*i.e.* three days after the date of its election) it should be overthrown by means of a *Parlamento* and another *Balìa*, but they again refused to follow his advice. So the new Signory were installed without opposition on September 1st, and the first act of the incoming gonfalonier was to commit his predecessor to prison for embezzling the public funds. Once more Rinaldo assembled his party,³ and insisted that an immediate appeal to arms was necessary to secure their own safety, and once more his proposal was rejected.⁴ But before the meeting dispersed it was agreed by those present, that in the event of any hostile measure on the part of the government, they would arm their dependants and rally round Rinaldo in the Piazza Sant' Apollinare. It was not long before such a contingency occurred. On September 26th the Signory cited Rinaldo degli Albizzi, Ridolfo Peruzzi,

¹ Machiavelli, 181. Rinaldo accused Mariotto of having been bribed by Cosimo. It is said that Cosimo had paid him 800 florins (Roscoe, 1862, p. 57).

² For writing this letter Acciaiuoli was tortured and exiled for ten years.

³ The opposition to Rinaldo's proposal was led by Palla Strozzi.

⁴ The meeting took place in the church of San Piero Maggiore.

and Niccolò Barbadori to appear before them. This was a far more justifiable act than the citation of Cosimo in the previous year, seeing that Rinaldo and his friends had been plotting for the overthrow of the government. Unlike Cosimo, they dared not obey the summons, and it was answered by the appearance of some 800 Rinaldeschi under arms in the Piazza S. Apollinare. The gathering consisted mainly of a rabble who shouted "*carne e fuoco*," and evidently came for plunder. Some of the leaders were conspicuous by their absence, notably Palla Strozzi and Piero Guicciardini. The former, when sent for, appeared with two unarmed followers, and the latter excused himself. But the gathering was sufficient to create a panic among the Signory, who barricaded the doors of the Palazzo, and promised Rinaldo well-nigh all he asked if he would disperse his followers. Rinaldo, however, refused to parley, and there is no saying how matters would have ended but for the intervention of Pope Eugenius IV., who, having been forced to fly from Rome in the previous June, had taken up his abode in Florence.¹ The Pope, either for the sake of peace or for some less disinterested motive,² requested Rinaldo to wait upon him at S. Maria Novella. What arguments Eugenius used we do not know, but at the end of the interview Rinaldo dismissed his armed band.³ The Signory at once recovered courage, and sending off to Pistoja for mercenary troops, on the following day (September 28th) they had a sufficient force at their command to maintain their authority. Much the same scene as had been enacted a year before was now repeated, but the Cosimeschi and Rinaldeschi were playing different parts. A *Parlamento* was summoned by the ringing of the great bell, the Piazza was filled with armed supporters of the Medici, and a *Balia* consisting of 359 members (the largest on record) was appointed.⁴ On September 29th Cosimo's recall was decreed by an overwhelming majority. The Pope's promise of indemnity

¹ He was residing in the convent of S. Maria Novella, in the same rooms that Martin V. had occupied. He fled from Rome, disguised as a monk, in an open boat on the Tiber, and was recognised and pursued, and narrowly escaped capture (Creighton, ii. 90, 91).

² It has been surmised that the Pope desired to annex Florence to the Papal States (Gino Capponi, ii. 224, note), or that he feared the Milanese leanings of the Albizzi (Ewart's *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 66).

³ According to another account Rinaldo refused to be persuaded to lay down arms, but while the interview was going on his followers disbanded of their own accord.

⁴ The powers conferred on this *Balia* were not limited even with restrictions as to the *Catasto* and election bags.

to the insurgents was disregarded. Rinaldo degli Albizzi and his son Ormanno were banished for eight, and Ridolfo Peruzzi and Niccolò Barbadori for three years. The Pope's mediation, by whatever reasons prompted, had placed him in an ignominious position. He made but a feeble attempt to protect the exiles, and when Rinaldo paid him a parting visit he endeavoured to exonerate himself. "Holy Father," replied Rinaldo, "I blame myself for believing that you, who have been driven out of your own country, could keep me in mine. . . . He who trusts a priest's word is like a blind man without a guide."¹ Rinaldo degli Albizzi never set foot in Florence again.² On October 6th Cosimo re-entered the city, and he was greeted with demonstrations of joy by a vast concourse of people. His reception was that of a conqueror, and he was spontaneously saluted as a public benefactor and as the father of his country.³ Averardo de' Medici, the Pucci, and others who had been banished in the previous year, were also recalled. Averardo did not long enjoy his change of fortune, as he died on the 5th of December following his return.

ART AND LITERATURE

1406-1434

ARCHITECTS	SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	AUTHORS
Brunelleschi	Ghiberti	Fra Angelico	Domenico Burchiello
Pesello	Donatello	Lorenzo Monaco	
	Michelozzo	Masolino	
	Pesello	Masaccio	
	Luca della Robbia	Uccello	
		Castagno	
		Gentile da Fabriano	
		Pesello	

ARCHITECTURE

The period at which we have now arrived is one of peculiar interest in the history of Italian Art. Its new birth, as has been noticed, took place in the days of Niccola Pisano, but it had not as yet developed those characteristics which custom has associated

¹ Creighton, ii. 321.

² Forty-four years later civil rights were restored to Alessandro, a great grandson of Rinaldo degli Albizzi (Reumont, ii. 318).

³ Machiavelli, p. 185.

with the term Renaissance. This development was now manifesting itself and it was directed by the action of opposing forces. The classical revival which had affected Literature a century before had at length spread to Art, and its appearance was seen more distinctly in Architecture than in Sculpture or Painting. Renaissance Architecture was the result of Christianity and Paganism—it was a compound of Gothic and Classical types. In its first phase it was noble and profitable, but it became destructive of all life and progress when artists, no longer seeking to embody abstract principles derived from ancient buildings in new forms, aimed merely at mechanical imitation. Its evolution was facilitated by local conditions. After the decadence of the Roman Empire, the Romanesque style (which was an adaptation of classic forms to Christian purposes) prevailed in Italy until the sixth or seventh centuries, when it developed, in the north, into Lombardic and, in the south, into Byzantine.¹ In Rome and central Italy the Romanesque was continued until the thirteenth century, when all the three styles that were being contemporaneously employed in different places—the Lombardic, the Byzantine, and the Romanesque—were modified by the introduction of the pointed arch.² This to some extent explains the diversity of type that is to be found in Italian Gothic. That diversity, however, is perhaps more largely due to purely local characteristics and differences of taste that arose from the independence, and were accentuated by the rivalries, of the numerous states into which the country was divided.³ But throughout all the various types that Italian Gothic comprises, the influence of Imperial Rome is clearly visible. Italy was never able to free herself from the traditions of classic architecture, and so in the fifteenth century she instinctively and willingly abandoned Gothic for the more congenial style of the Renaissance. The originator of that style was Filippo Brunelleschi, one of the greatest architects that Italy ever produced.

¹ Venice must be excepted from this statement, for there the architecture was Byzantine.

² Among the best-known specimens of these styles are:—Of the Lombardic, San Zenone at Verona and San Ambrogio at Milan; of the Byzantine, S. Marco at Venice and a church at Molfetta in Apulia; of the Romanesque, San Lorenzo fuori le mura, S. Agnese, and many other basilicas at Rome.

³ The differences in the architecture even of neighbouring states is very remarkable, *e.g.* between that of Lucca and Pisa, and between that of Verona and Mantua.

BRUNELLESCHI was born in Florence in 1377. He began life as a goldsmith and sculptor and, as was noticed in the last chapter, he was, in 1401, one of the unsuccessful competitors for the honour of designing and casting a bronze gate for the Baptistery. As success in this competition determined Ghiberti's career, so did failure determine that of Brunelleschi. He went immediately to Rome, where he devoted himself exclusively to the study of architecture, and on his return to Florence in 1407 he evolved a style which, without being a servile imitation of the classic,¹ was founded on its principles.

In 1420 he designed the beautiful capella de' Pazzi, which adjoins the church of S. Croce, and which was the first ecclesiastical building of the Italian Renaissance; and in the following year, at Giovanni de' Medici's desire, he designed the great church of San Lorenzo. The interior of the old sacristy in this church is an excellent example of Brunelleschi's style.

But the work with which his name is more generally associated than with any other is the cupola of the Florentine Duomo, with the construction of which he was entrusted in 1419.² After his design had been approved, the Board who were in charge of the work seem to have been distrustful of his plan of building the dome without centreing, and they consequently associated with him Ghiberti as joint architect of the building. By this arrangement he was much hampered in his work, for Ghiberti was not only very bad-tempered, but he was ignorant of the elements of architecture. Owing to this and other difficulties with which Brunelleschi had to contend, the dome was not completed till 1434.³ It is certainly one of the triumphs of architecture. In outline it is less graceful than that of S. Peter's, but owing to its colour and the peculiarity of its curves, it is in some respects even a more striking object.

The beautiful loggia of the Spedale degli Innocenti was also

¹ This is only true of Renaissance Architecture in its earlier stages. It ultimately degenerated into a mere copy of Greek and Roman forms.

² Considerable indecision had prevailed as to the best form of roof for the central space and apses of the Duomo, and councils of architects had often been convened to consider the matter. It is probable that Arnolfo di Cambio intended that the building should be crowned with a succession of diminishing octagonal towers, capped with a low spire, somewhat after the design of the Chiaravalle, near Milan (Fergusson's *History of Architecture*, 1874, ii. 334).

³ The lantern on the summit of the dome was not put up until 1462 (after Brunelleschi's death), and it is not entirely in accordance with his design. The gallery round the drum was completed later, and the façade was unveiled on May 12th, 1887.

Brunelleschi's work, and was probably begun about this time. Those who desire to appreciate his skill as a designer of detail should examine the door of the cloister at S. Croce. In 1433 he designed the church of S. Spirito, which will be referred to again in the next chapter.

PESELLO¹ (1367-1446) was an architect, sculptor, and painter of some reputation. His design for the cupola of the Duomo in 1419 was not accepted, but he was appointed to superintend its erection in the event of Brunelleschi's death. The frieze on the tabernacle of the Calimala Guild in Or San Michele was modelled by him in 1414-1416.²

SCULPTURE

Sculpture, like Architecture, benefited by the conflict of intellectual forces that was going on at this time, but the strife out of which it emerged, with all the vigour and beauty of youth, was more complex. A third force was brought into play which largely, and only at first beneficially, influenced its development. Renaissance Architecture, as we have seen, was moulded by the joint action of Paganism and Christianity. But Paganism (as the term is here used) was only a part of the great Humanistic movement that was revolutionising the mental and spiritual world. That movement did not, as is sometimes supposed, spring merely from a reverence for classical art and classical literature, but its source lay in a burning desire for knowledge of every kind. The Humanists read with avidity the writings of the Greeks and Romans, and copied with untiring industry their sculpture and their buildings, because they found in them a revelation of truth and beauty, but they laboured with no less enthusiasm to increase, by observation and discovery, the sum of human knowledge. Hence the Humanists turned to Nature no less than to Antiquity for instruction, and thus it was that Italian Sculpture of the fifteenth century was the product of Christianity, Paganism, and Naturalism.³ These forces did not, however, divide sculpture into any clearly defined rival schools, but they worked collectively in each artist in different degrees of intensity, often varying in their relative influence at different periods

¹ His real name was Guiliiano d'Arigo di Giuocolo Giuochi.

² Crowe and Cav., ii. 357.

³ Some confusion of thought has arisen from speaking of Paganism and Naturalism as if they were convertible terms. In Painting no doubt they had much in common, but in Sculpture they were diametrically opposed.

of his career.¹ Christianity and Paganism were most often opposed in the choice of the sculptor's subject, Paganism and Naturalism in its treatment, and it was between the two latter combatants that the death struggle ultimately took place. So long as Naturalism was controlled, so long as it was only allowed to remove conventional monotony and add truth and life, all went well with sculpture. Then it was that Donatello's S. George, Rossellini's Tomb of Cardinal Portogallo, Verrocchio's Cupid the Palazzo Vecchio, and many other works of almost equal excellence, were produced. But even in these early days Naturalism had sometimes an unhealthy tendency. Some of Donatello's works are disagreeably realistic, and Ghiberti, notwithstanding his classical sense of beauty, in his desire to represent things as he saw them, made an illegitimate use of perspective. But when in later days to copy some natural object accurately, regardless of its beauty or its inner meaning, became the artist's paramount desire, the days of sculpture were numbered. It was not, as with Architecture, from too close an imitation of antique forms that Sculpture expired, but from departing too widely from them. It was Naturalism and not Paganism that signed the death warrant of Renaissance Sculpture.²

The bronze gate of the Baptistry, which Ghiberti commenced in 1403, was finished in 1424. No less than twenty artists, among whom were Donatello, Brunelleschi, Verrocchio, Desiderio da Settignano, Paolo Uccello, and Finiguerra, aided him in modelling and casting it.³ It contains twenty-eight panels, twenty of which depict scenes from the New Testament, and eight represent the Evangelists and Doctors of the Latin Church. The corners are filled in with heads of prophets and sibyls, and the panels are set in an elaborate framework of leaves, birds, and animals. In some of these compositions four distinct incidents are represented, and yet there is no confusion, and each scene tells its own story. To produce this marvellous

¹ This was notably the case with Donatello. In Michelangelo these forces worked more spasmodically. There are two works of his in the Casa Buonarroti (a Madonna and the Centaurs) executed about the same time, one of which is ideal in conception and classical in execution, the other classical in conception and naturalistic in execution.

² No doubt in so far as Paganism, by supplanting Christianity, had dried up the springs of a productive enthusiasm it had a hand in the destruction of every Art.

³ Vasari, i. 382; Ottley's *History of Engraving*, i. 289.

result the idea of distance was given by the gradual diminution in relief from "*Alto*," through "*Mezzo*" and "*Basso*" to "*Stacciato*" (the very flattest possible), and by a free use of perspective.¹

In 1414 Ghiberti cast the statue of S. John, between 1419 and 1422 that of S. Stephen, and probably about the same time that of S. Matthew,² all of which occupy niches on the outside of the church of Or San Michele. In statues he was not as successful as he was in bas-reliefs.

DONATELLO, as Donato, the son of Niccolò di Betto Bardi, is called, was born in 1386. He was "undoubtedly the greatest Tuscan sculptor before Michelangelo, and though by no means his equal in vigour and grandeur of conception, by far his superior in delicacy of handling, in truth of detail, in rendering of character, and in technical ability as a worker in marble or bronze."³ It is said that he studied painting under Bicci di Lorenzo, and that he accompanied Brunelleschi to Rome in 1403, where he made drawings of the masterpieces of classical sculpture, but modern critics disbelieve in this visit,⁴ and his early works certainly show little evidence of his having studied from the antique. One of these is the wooden crucifix in S. Croce,⁵ which Brunelleschi said was more like a peasant than a Christ. He resided in Florence till 1426, and during this period he executed the following works:—The statues of SS. Peter and Mark in niches outside Or San Michele; a Joshua, reliefs of prophets and (possibly) the old man, said to be a statue of the scholar Poggio Bracciolini, in the Duomo; and a S. John the Baptist, *Il Zuccone*, a Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Abraham and Isaac, outside the Campanile. In 1415 he executed the seated figure of S. John the Evangelist that is now in the Duomo, and the marble statue of David that is in the Bargello, and in 1416 the S. George for one of the Or San Michele niches. This statue is generally considered to be Donatello's *chef d'œuvre*, and it "deservedly ranks as the finest personification of a Christian hero ever wrought in marble."⁶

Between 1426 and 1434 Donatello worked from time to time and in various places in conjunction with Michelozzo

¹ Perkins, i. 129.

² It is said that he was assisted by Michelozzo in this statue.

³ Perkins, i. 137.

⁴ M. Raymond's *La Sculpture Florentine*, p. 101.

⁵ This may have been executed before 1403. ⁶ Perkins, i. 140.

Michelozzi.¹ One of their most important productions was the beautiful tomb of Pope John XXIII. in the Baptistery at Florence which was finished in 1427.

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA (1400-1482) commenced sculpturing some bas-reliefs for an organ gallery in the cathedral in 1431, but they were not finished till 1440 and will be described in the next chapter.

PAINTING

Painting also gained at this time by the action of opposing forces, but here the conditions of the contest were different. The course of Architecture, as we endeavoured to show, was determined entirely by the joint action of Christianity and Paganism, and that of Sculpture mainly by a struggle between Paganism and Naturalism. Renaissance Painting (although largely influenced by Paganism) was rather the outcome of opposition between Christianity (or Christian Idealism) and Naturalism.² Painters had not, like Architects and Sculptors, any classical models for their guidance, and so it was to Nature and not to Antiquity, when drifting away from ecclesiastical traditions, that they turned for instruction. It is true that they often sought inspirations from pagan myths, but the distinctive characteristic of their works was the closeness with which they strove to copy natural objects—trees, flowers, animals, and, above all, the human form. Faith in a creed had, as a motive power, given place in these men, not so much to an enthusiasm for Antiquity, as to a passionate love of Nature and a constraining desire to master her every law.³ Naturalism, it is true, was no new thing—it was as old as Giotto—but it had never before gained sufficient power to dispute with Religion the supremacy over the field of Art. Its effect on Painting was in one way more noticeable than its effect on Sculpture, for painters became for a time divided into two schools which worked side by side. The one (which composed those who rarely represented any but sacred subjects in a more or less conventional manner) may be called that of

¹ It was then that they executed the tomb of Cardinal Brancacci in the church of S. Angelo a Nilo at Naples, and the tomb of Bartolommeo Aragazzi for the cathedral at Montepulciano (only fragments of which remain), and the bronze bas-reliefs on the font in the Baptistery at Siena. When in Florence their studio was in the Via Calzaiole.

² The reader is referred to the prefatory remarks on the Sculpture of this period for the distinction which is drawn between Paganism and Naturalism.

³ How it came about that a passion, so intrinsically ennobling, proved destructive of Art, will be seen later,

the Idealists; the new one may be called, indifferently and with equal accuracy, that of the Naturalists, Scientists, or Realists. Nevertheless there was not an Idealist whose works did not show some naturalistic influence, or a realist who had freed himself altogether from idealistic traditions. And as it was with Architecture and Sculpture, so it was with Painting. In the early days of the struggle Painting was ennobled—she gained in truthfulness without any appreciable loss in sentiment or beauty; but as time went on the loss not only became appreciable, but it outweighed the gain. It was not, however, for more than a century that the idealists were completely subjugated by the realists.

The school of naturalistic painters that now appeared was headed by Masaccio, and it included Masolino, Uccello, Castagno, Pesello. But before touching on their works it will be well to notice those of the rival school. By far the strongest representative of the idealists was the last and (if we except Orcagna) perhaps the greatest of the Florentine branch of the Semi-Byzantines — one Guido,¹ who on joining the Order of the Dominicans in 1407 assumed the monastic name of Giovanni. He entered the convent at Fiesole and was known as “Fra Giovanni da Fiesole.” He soon became famous as a skilful miniaturist, and before long he earned a yet wider reputation as a fresco-painter. His angelic temper and blameless life obtained for him the *sobriquet* of *Angelico*, and he is now universally known as “FRA ANGELICO.”² We have no certain knowledge of the masters who instructed him, but it seems probable that his style was formed under the influence of the works of Orcagna, Cavallini, Taddeo di Bartolo, Simone Martini, and the Sienese miniaturists.³ Until towards the end of his career he resisted the influences of the Renaissance, he refused to depict the nude, he neglected the study of geometry and anatomy, and he sought only “to express the inner life of the adoring soul.” Consequently his earlier manner has many technical imperfections, but no painter before or since has been such an adequate exponent of religious raptures, and “it may be said that painting

¹ His family name is unknown. He was born at Vicchio in the Mugello in 1387 (Vasari, ii. 24).

² After his death he was also called *beato*. Hence his full name is *Beato Giovanni detto Angelico da Fiesole* (Lindsay, ii. 223).

³ “Therefore the lines would appear to centre in Fra Angelico from every pre-existent branch of the Semi-Byzantines” (Lindsay, ii. 225).

with him served as a formulary to express the emotions of faith, hope, and charity.”¹ But he was not content even in his youth to leave his art quite where he found it, for he imparted to many of his faces a distinctive personality which places them in advance of the more conventional creations of his predecessors. If anyone is repelled by Fra Angelico no mediæval art can have any attraction for him. We may admit the narrow piety of the monk, but the heavenly beauty of many of his creations is a revelation of the highest kind which has no equal in the whole domain of Painting.² His earliest works are to be found at Cortona and Perugia. In 1418 he returned to Fiesole, where “he gathered in abundance the flowers of art which he seemed to have plucked from Paradise, reserving for the pleasant hill of Fiesole the gayest and best scented that ever issued from his hands. There, in a period of corruption, of pagan doctrine, of infamous policy, of schisms and of heresies, he shut himself up within a world of his own, which he peopled with heroes and saints, with whom he conversed, prayed, and wept by turns.”³ The Madonna and Saints which is now in the Sala di Lorenzo Monaco, he painted in 1433. Very few of his other easel pictures can be dated, and it is impossible to say whether most of them belong to this or the period which will be dealt with in the next chapter. It is however likely that some of his works which are now in the *Accademia* were executed between 1418 and 1434, and he may, with his brother Fra Benedetto, have been illuminating choir books at about the same time. His frescoes and other later works will be alluded to subsequently.

LORENZO MONACO (b. *circa* 1370, d. 1425) was a pupil of Agnolo Gaddi, but his style has something in common with that of Spinello Aretino.⁴ He was a Camaldolese monk, and he was sometimes called “Don Lorenzo.” In his early life he was reputed to be one of the best miniaturists of his age.⁵ Although older than Fra Angelico, he did not disdain to act as his assistant.⁶ Four of his works (three of which were executed between 1403 and 1413)⁷ are in the Uffizi, and four are in the *Accademia*. One of his finest works—an altar-piece, representing the Annunciation—is in the Bartolini Chapel in S. Trinità, at

¹ Rio's *Christian Art* (1855), p. 148.

² *The Cicerone*, p. 53.

³ Marchese, i. 226. Cited by Crowe and Cav., i. 573.

⁴ Crowe and Cav., i. 552.

⁵ Vasari, i. 280.

⁶ Crowe and Cav., i. 551.

⁷ Lafenestre, pp. 8, 9, 97.

Florence. It is a singularly beautiful picture. The subject is conventionally treated, but the graceful attitudes and thoughtful expression of the two figures have given it a charm beyond many a later and more original work.¹ Some of the manuscripts in the Laurentian Library were illuminated by Lorenzo Monaco.²

MASOLINO DA PINICALE,³ as Tommaso di Cristoforo Fini is commonly called, has until recently been supposed, on the authority of Vasari, to have had a hand in painting the celebrated frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel;⁴ but some modern critics hold that this is a mistake.⁵ Judging from works that are undoubtedly authentic, it is evident that the influence of Antonio Veneziano was transmitted to him through Starnina.⁶ He was born in 1383, he was living in 1428, and he died (if Vasari be correct) about 1440. His style displays progress in correctness of drawing, but his composition is feeble. He was the first to commingle the devout feeling of Angelico with the realism of Angelico's successors.⁷ Perhaps his title to fame rests on his having been the master of Masaccio rather than on his own merits.

MASACCIO (1402-1429) is the name by which Tommaso, the son of Ser Giovanni di Simone Guidi, is known.⁸ He is a less interesting figure to the ordinary lover of early Italian painting than his contemporary Fra Angelico, for his charm "is as nothing in comparison with that which holds us spell-bound before the sacred and impassioned reveries of the Fiesolean monk"; and yet to the student of the history of Painting his works are more important, for "it is clear that we must look not to Fra Angelico, but to Masaccio, for the progressive forces that were carrying art forward to complete accomplishment."⁹

¹ *The Cicerone*, p. 56. The four small paintings in the predella are also very lovely.

² Mr. Berenson attributes to him the three pinnacles over Fra Angelico's Deposition in the *Accademia* and a fresco of the Entombment in S. Maria Nuova.

³ Masolino is a contraction of Tommasino (the diminutive of Tommaso), and means "pretty little Tommy."

⁴ Vasari, ii. 275 and vi. 50; Albertini, Lanzi, Rumohr, and others hold this opinion (*vid.* Crowe and Cav., i. 510), as well as Richter, Lafenestre, and Berenson.

⁵ Crowe and Cav., i. 510, 516; *The Cicerone*, p. 60.

⁶ He unquestionably painted a series of frescoes in the church of Castiglione di Olona (between Saronno and Vanese), c. 1428 (Crowe and Cav., i. 499).

⁷ *The Cicerone*, p. 60.

⁸ It is the short for Tommasaccio, which means "great hulking Tom," a nickname which was given him from his ungainly figure and slovenly dress.

⁹ Symonds, iii. 240.

The stride which painting made, under the direction of his genius, seems almost miraculous, when it is remembered that he died in his twenty-eighth year. It has been said of him that he introduced into painting the plastic boldness of Donatello, as well as the laws of geometrical and aerial perspective.¹

At the age of twenty-three he was enrolled in the Guild of Painters,² and at an early age he visited Rome. There he painted the frescoes of the Crucifixion and the stories of S. Clement and of S. Catherine of Alexandria in the church of S. Clemente, which, though much restored, are still admirable. If, as is said,³ he returned to Florence in 1420, these great works must have been executed when he was but eighteen years old, which is almost incredible. They must, however, have been painted before he was twenty-two, for the frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel in the Carmine at Florence, which are of superior merit, may, with certainty be assigned to the years 1423-1428.⁴

It has been a matter of much controversy what parts of the famous Brancacci frescoes were respectively executed by Masaccio, Masolino, and Filippo Lippi. There can, however, be no doubt that the greater part of them are by Masaccio.⁵ His end was mysterious. He disappeared from Florence in 1428, and in 1429 it was reported that he was dead. During his life his works were not held in much esteem, but after his death their merits were speedily recognised, and the greatest artists in Italy came to study them in the Carmine.⁶ They do in truth form a bridge between mediæval and renaissance painting, and in them Masaccio seems, as it were, to stretch out one hand to Giotto and the other to Raphael. But if, while gazing with admiration on the Brancacci frescoes, we call to mind those in the Arena Chapel, we are almost constrained to question with Symonds whether, while so much has been gained, something has not been lost? Did not Masaccio think overmuch of external form? Was he as capable as Giotto of bringing home to our hearts the secret and soul of things spiritual? "Has not art beneath his touch become more scenic, losing thereby somewhat of dramatic poignancy?"⁷ Hence it is that the works of

¹ Crowe and Cav., i. 519.

² *Ibid.*, 521.

³ *Ibid.*, i. 526.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 528.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 528; *Ency. Brit.*, xv. 606.

⁶ Vasari, p. 411.

⁷ Symonds, iii. 230. For another innovation, Masaccio must be held responsible. He departed from the custom of representing the apostles

Masaccio have a twofold interest for the student of Art, for he sees in them not only the bud which was to blossom into the technical excellence of the great *cinquecento* masters, but also the beginnings of a parasitic growth which was to sap Italian painting of all its vitality.

PAOLO UCCELLO (1397-1475) and ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO (1390-1461) commenced working during this period, but as none of their dated works can be assigned to it they will be mentioned subsequently.

The Umbrian painter GENTILE DA FABRIANO (1360-1428) settled in Florence in 1422, and in the following year he painted the Adoration of the *Accademia*. "This is Gentile's best extant effort, proving that his stay in Florence had taught him something more than he had learned at home," yet that his Umbrian feeling prevented his adopting the innovations of Uccello or Masaccio.¹ In 1425 he painted a Madonna between SS. Mary Magdalen, John the Baptist, Nicholas of Bari, and George. The central portion of this picture has disappeared, but the four Saints are in the Uffizi.

PESELLO, the architect and sculptor, was also a painter. He belonged to the group of naturalists, and he experimented in the use of new media, such as varnish and oil. At the close of his life he painted in conjunction with his grandson Pesellino.²

WOOD-ENGRAVING

Another art was undoubtedly at this period in its infancy, although no dated specimen is extant. This was the art of xylography, or wood-engraving, which must certainly have been practised in Florence before 1430, for an artist included in the return of his property made in that year for entry in the *Catasto* "many wood-blocks for the printing of playing-cards and images of Saints useful to him in his profession."³ In the absence of prints to which any date can be assigned it is impossible to say

(notably SS. Peter and Paul) in accordance with traditional types. Lord Lindsay says that he painted one of his friends as S. Peter; and, according to Vasari, his S. Paul (which has disappeared) was a full-length portrait of Bartolo di Angiolini. From that moment there has been no security against ploughmen and gondoliers figuring as inspired Apostles (Lindsay, i. 235).

¹ Crowe and Cav., iii. 101.

² Vasari has confused the grandfather with the grandson.

³ Kristeller, vol. i. p. ii.

how far the art had progressed at this time, nor will reliable evidence of its progress be forthcoming for more than half a century.

LITERATURE

The first three decades of the fifteenth century were even more barren in literature than the closing years of the preceding century. Domenico BURCHIELLO (c. 1400-1448) is the only Florentine writer of this period whose name even survives. His sonnets, which went through thirty editions, were written in fifteenth-century slang and are now hardly intelligible.¹

¹ Symonds, iv. 260.

CHAPTER XIII

1435-1457

VINDICTIVE POLICY OF THE COSIMESCHI—COSIMO DE' MEDICI'S
FOREIGN POLICY—THE COUNCIL OF FLORENCE

SOON after Cosimo's return he was appointed Gonfalonier of Justice¹ and his party proceeded, after the usual manner of victorious factions in Florence, to establish their supremacy. Had not similar measures always failed to crush the vanquished party in the past, those that were now taken would appear unreasonably severe. It is true that the government had not recourse to much bloodshed, but they pursued a vindictive policy with a persistency and thoroughness hitherto unknown. Like Bruce when he thrust his dagger into the dead Comyn, they determined to "mac sicher." The terms of banishment of many who had been previously sentenced were extended, and more and more citizens were expatriated, until there was scarcely a city in Italy which was not the asylum of some Florentine exiles.²

Amongst other repressive measures it was enacted that no exile, whose term had expired, should be allowed to return without the approval of not less than thirty-four members of a Council of thirty-seven. It was made a crime to correspond with those in banishment, and "every word, every sign, every habit, that was displeasing to the government was severely punished."³ Everyone who was even suspected of being hostile to the party in power was persecuted. Some were called on for excessive contributions to the forced loans, and others found themselves hampered in business by the secret influence of the Medici bank. Four citizens were beheaded for the paltry offence of having taken up

¹ He held the office during January and February, 1435.

² About eighty citizens were banished. Among the most eminent of these (besides Rinaldo degli Albizzi) were Ridolfo Peruzzi, Niccolo Barbadori, Palla Strozzi, and members of the Guicciardini, Guadagni, Uzzani, and Gianni families (Machiavelli, p. 184; Napier, iii. 225).

³ Machiavelli, p. 191.

their abode in Venice after they had been banished to some other place.¹ The estates of exiles were confiscated and sold to members of the government for a mere song.

One of the most unjustifiable acts committed by this *Balla* was the banishment of Palla Strozzi. He was not a turbulent politician and he had shown himself a very lukewarm supporter of Rinaldo. He was a highly cultivated man and an enthusiastic patron of literature. He had procured the installation of Chrysoloras as Professor of Greek in the University. He obtained from Greece the first copy of Aristotle's *Politics* that ever found its way into Italy. He kept many copyists at work on manuscripts, and he purchased numbers of books for a public library which he intended to found near the church of Santa Trinità. Possibly Cosimo feared one who might rival him in the patronage of letters and whose wealth was equal to, if it did not exceed, his own.² He died in exile at Padua, separated from his children, who had been banished to other towns.³

The families who had been banished by the Albizzi faction were recalled, most of the disfranchised nobles had their civil rights gradually restored to them,⁴ and citizens of little note who had served Cosimo's party were promoted and honoured.⁵ The election bags were refilled with the names of adherents of the dominant faction, and *Accoppiatori* were appointed to manipulate future elections. But this device had already been employed by the adversaries of the government without avail, so the victorious party procured the passing of a law by which the outgoing Signory (in conjunction with the *Accoppiatori*) were empowered to nominate their successors in office. This was apparently a violent constitutional change. That it should have been allowed to pass without disturbance is a sign, either that the Florentines had realised that their freedom was but a figment, or that they were ready to surrender it for the sake of a stable government. Another equally unwarrantable constitutional change was the removal of causes of a political character from the court of the

¹ Machiavelli says (p. 190) that the Venetians, "valuing Cosimo's friendship more than their own honour," had handed these unfortunate refugees over to the Signory, but he adds that they may have done it "not so much in kindness to Cosimo as to increase the factions in Florence."

² In the *catasto* of 1427 Palla Strozzi's property had been valued at one-fifth more than that of Giovanni de' Medici.

³ Symonds, ii. 166-168.

⁴ Amongst others the Frescobaldi, Ricasoli, Bardi, and the historian Cavalcanti.

⁵ Guicciardini, p. 6.

podestà to the *Otto di Balla* or *Otto di Guardia*, which henceforth became the Supreme Criminal Court. The *Otto di Guardia* were all carefully selected partisans, and their administration of justice was very corrupt. By these means the party, of which Cosimo was the leader, in a short time cleared the city of all their enemies, and firmly secured the government in their own hands.

Whether Cosimo can be justly held responsible for all of the measures by which this end was attained is not quite certain. It was said that they originated with Puccio, to whom "the most subtle thoughts were always attributed."¹ Machiavelli imputes them to those persons who had been most active in procuring Cosimo's restoration, or who had previously undergone extraordinary sufferings. A vindictive policy was no doubt initiated before Cosimo's return, but it was developed and pursued with vigour afterwards, which could hardly have been done without his concurrence. He was perhaps not altogether a free agent, for we are told that when he remonstrated with his friends as to the severity of the measures which they introduced, he was met with the retort that it was he who was beholden to them and not they to him. Guicciardini, too, says that he had to put up with the "infinite extortions of his friends." But on the other hand, when a friend expostulated with him on the loss which the city had sustained through the banishment of so many eminent citizens, he is reported to have cynically replied that "a city crushed² was better than a city lost," and that "plenty of citizens could be manufactured with a couple of yards of scarlet cloth."³ There is no doubt, however, that he was averse to bloodshed, and during his gonfaloniership in 1435 he would not sanction the execution of a single person.

In April, 1436, Pope Eugenius left Florence, where he had resided for nearly two years. Just before his departure he took part in the consecration of the new cathedral which was approaching completion.⁴ The splendour of the ceremony, which took place on March 25th, was worthy of the occasion. A raised passage from the door of S. Maria Novella passing through the Baptistry to the great western door of the cathedral, richly

¹ Gino Capponi, ii. 246.

² *Guastato*.

³ Alluding to the red cloaks worn by Florentine citizens (Gino Capponi, ii. 246).

⁴ The architecture of the building is noticed at the end of this, and the construction of the dome at the end of the last chapter.

carpeted, and decorated with tapestry, damask, silk, and flowers was constructed. Through this the Pope, accompanied by seven cardinals, thirty-seven archbishops and bishops, by ambassadors of many of the principal powers, and by the Signory, proceeded from his residence to the cathedral. The Pope consecrated the principal altar "with exquisite ceremony, according to the use of the Roman Church," whilst Cardinal Orsini, mounted on a ladder, anointed the walls. When the rite, which occupied five hours, was ended, the Pope returned to S. Maria Novella, the gonfalonier (who had just been knighted) bearing his train.¹ The old cathedral had been dedicated to S. Reparata, the new one was dedicated to S. Maria del Fiore.

Towards the end of the year 1435 a guest was entertained at Florence with much ceremony, whose visit had ultimately a marked effect on Florentine affairs. This was the *condottiere*, Francesco Sforza, who was at this time one of the most important personages in Italy. The *condottiere* system was now at its height, and it had almost displaced all other modes of warfare. The numerous mercenary troops which, when not engaged in active service, were preying on some unfortunate State, were divided into two rival branches (or "sects," as Machiavelli has it²), one of which was known as the Sforzesca and the other as the Braccesca. Sforza was the head of the former, and Piccinino (seconded by Niccolo Fortebraccio) of the latter. After the conclusion of the peace negotiations between Florence and Milan in 1427 Sforza and Fortebraccio betook themselves to La Marca and Romagna, where they endeavoured to found principalities for themselves at the expense of the Pope. Fortebraccio seized Montefiascone, Citta di Castello, and Assisi, while Sforza established himself at Fermo, whence he impudently dated his letters: "From our falcon's nest at Fermo in spite of Peter and Paul."³

As his Florentine allies were unsuccessful in their attempts to dispossess Fortebraccio, the Pope was reluctantly compelled to enlist the services of Sforza, which he did by confirming his title to Fermo and other places in La Marca, and by appointing him *gonfaloniere* of the papal forces. Before long Fortebraccio was slain, and all the cities which he had taken were restored

¹ Ammirato, v. 231.

² p. 188.

³ Machiavelli, p. 189. He also possessed himself of other places in La Marca.

to the Church. It was to receive the thanks of the Pope for having achieved this result that Sforza now visited Florence. He did not remain there many days, but before his departure an intimacy had sprung up between him and Cosimo which ripened into a friendship. This friendship was a contributory cause of the reversal of Florentine foreign policy which Cosimo subsequently effected.

It was not, however, for some years that he departed from the traditions which had regulated the relations of Florence with her neighbours. He was well aware how largely her prosperity depended on a prudent administration of foreign affairs and how the prestige, which his ability as a diplomatist gained for him abroad, strengthened his position at home. Hence he always regarded foreign policy as a matter of supreme importance, and many of the constitutional changes which he promoted were effected with a view of keeping its control in his own hands.

He maintained for a time the league between Florence, Venice, and the Pope, which had been formed to curb the ambition of the Visconti, and just at first Florence was drawn closer to her two allies through his influence, for he was grateful to Venice for the reception which she gave him when in exile, and to Pope Eugenius for having facilitated his recall. He also continued to favour the claims of the house of Anjou to the throne of Naples and, as Filippo-Maria had recently espoused the cause of Alfonso of Aragon, this soon provoked hostilities between Florence and Milan. The Florentine exiles were not slow to turn this rupture to account. Rinaldo degli Albizzi and his friends at once repaired to Milan and urged the Duke to make war on Florence, promising to aid him both with a contingent of *fuorusciti* and by fermenting insurrection within the city. Filippo-Maria after a while yielded to Rinaldo's entreaties, and ordered Piccinino to invade Tuscany, but the Milanese forces were defeated by the Florentines in February, 1437, near the little town of Barga, and Piccinino was immediately recalled into Lombardy.

Florence being relieved for the moment from Milanese aggression, and having an army in the field flushed with victory, thought that a favourable opportunity had occurred for renewing her attempts to possess herself of Lucca. The design was favoured by Cosimo, who desired that his supremacy should be

marked by an enlargement of Florentine territory.¹ And now history, as might certainly have been expected, repeated itself. The siege had hardly commenced before the news reached Florence that Lucca had received a promise of support from Filippo-Maria Visconti. As the only way by which the arrival of Milanese succour could be prevented was by keeping the Duke's forces fully occupied in Lombardy, Cosimo himself set out to enlist the assistance of the Venetians, over whom he believed he exercised much influence. He was disappointed at his reception, and he did not improve his position during his stay by endeavouring to procure the removal to Florence of the Council of the Church, which was then sitting at Ferrara. He was given clearly to understand that Venice had no objection to the acquisition of Lucca by Florence, but she saw no reason why she should contribute to the cost. Ultimately, however, the Venetians professed themselves willing to comply with Cosimo's request, but they attached to their promise of aid a condition which was well-nigh impossible, but from which if complied with they would derive no little benefit. This was a stipulation, which appeared reasonable enough on the face of it, that Sforza should assume the command of the Venetian forces in Lombardy before the Duke was assailed. Now the Duke, as long ago as 1430, had promised the hand of his only daughter, Bianca, to Sforza. Three times the betrothal had been celebrated, but Filippo-Maria (probably as a means of retaining a hold over the great *condottiere*) had always, on some pretence or other, postponed the marriage. On these occasions Sforza had marched off in dudgeon with his troops, and joined the Duke's enemies, and hence it was that we have seen him more than once in the service of Florence. But there was a standing agreement between him and his future father-in-law that he would never fight against Milanese troops north of the Po. The Venetians were well aware of this agreement, and aware also that its breach would entail a final rupture between Sforza and Filippo-Maria, a consummation which they much desired. It was highly improbable that the ambitious Sforza would be induced to sacrifice all hope of a splendid matrimonial alliance, but his doing so was the price which Venice in effect required for her aid to Florence.

The Sforza - Visconti agreement was also known to the

¹ As the supremacy of his rival's father, Maso degli Albizzi, had been marked by the acquisition of Pisa.

Florentines and they soon ascertained from Sforza that he had no intention of violating it. Experience had not taught them that they were no match for the Venetians in the art of double-dealing, so they attempted to attain their end by a trick. They persuaded Sforza to write them a letter (on the understanding that he was not to be bound by it) expressing his willingness to lead his army across the Po and take service under the Venetians. This letter was then forwarded to Venice accompanied by an expression of opinion on the part of Florence that, although it was only a private letter, it ought to be considered binding. It was hoped by the senders that on its receipt Venice would commence hostilities against Milan, and that having done so she would feel bound to continue the war even without Sforza's aid. To give the ruse an appearance of good faith, Sforza raised the siege of Lucca, and marched across the Apennines to Reggio. There he was met by a representative of the Venetian government, who told him plainly that he would not be engaged by Venice until he had actually crossed the Po. This he declined to do, and high words ensued. He then returned into Tuscany, but he was shortly afterwards induced by a renewal of the offer of Bianca Visconti's hand to refuse to undertake further operations against Lucca.¹ The tortuous policy of the Signory had resulted only in the estrangement of an ally and the loss of a general, in consequence of which the expedition against Lucca was abandoned. This was the third entirely unwarrantable attempt that Florence had made, within a century, to take forcible possession of her thriving and inoffensive neighbour, and it ended like its two predecessors in well-merited failure. Nevertheless "it rarely happens that anyone is more grieved at the loss of their own property than the Florentines were at not having acquired that of others."²

Cosimo was again gonfalonier in 1439 and, before his term of office was over, it was evident that Florence would ere long be engaged in another war with Visconti. Filippo-Maria, trading on the recent estrangement between Florence and Venice, was endeavouring to recover Bergamo and Brescia. Venice had for

¹ The accounts of this somewhat complicated transaction are inconsistent. I have followed that of Machiavelli. Napier says (iii. 251) that it was with Florence that Sforza had stipulated that he would not cross the Po. And Urquhart (*Life and Times of Francesco Sforza*, 1852, vol. i. 287) seems to think that Venice was really in need of Sforza's services, and hoped by obtaining them to prevent Florence from acquiring Lucca.

² Machiavelli, 202.

a time successfully defended her possessions, but she was now beginning to doubt her ability to continue the combat single-handed. Notwithstanding past differences she turned to Florence for assistance, which Florence thought it politic to grant. With the aid of Neri Capponi, Venice persuaded Sforza that Filippo-Maria was once more going to play him false with regard to the hand of his daughter, and urged that nothing but fear would induce him to keep his promise.

Accordingly, in 1440, a league was formed between Florence and Venice, and the forces of the allies were placed under the command of Sforza. The Duke's army, under Piccinino, on its march into Tuscany, was repulsed in the mountain pass of San Benedetto. Piccinino then tried the equally strong pass of Marradi, which could have been easily defended, but Bartolommeo Orlandini, the officer commanding the Florentine garrison, on Piccinino's approach, shouted out to his soldiers, "Take to your heels, for the enemy is upon us," and ignominiously fled. The road was now clear to the gates of Florence, and before long the Milanese forces were in occupation of the heights of Fiesole. Some dismay prevailed in the city, but the government never wavered and there was no sign of surrender. Cosimo was beloved by the people and trusted by most of the upper classes, and the few who were in sympathy with the exiles "dared not so much as raise an eyebrow."¹ Piccinino had been led by Rinaldo degli Albizzi to believe that, as soon as his army was in sight, the gates of Florence would be thrown open to him, and when he found that he had been misled, at the invitation of Francesco Battifolli, Count of Poppi, he marched into the Casentino. The Counts of Poppi had for many years been stanch allies of Florence, but Cosimo had made an enemy of Francesco by refusing his consent to a marriage between his son Piero and Francesco's daughter Gualdrada after they had been betrothed.² This refusal had been brought about by the persuasion of Neri

¹ *Ammirato*, v. 259. The accounts of what took place in Florence vary. *Machiavelli* (p. 219) says that there was no dismay, but *Cavalcanti* says that the recall of the exiles was considered, and that Puccio had great difficulty in restoring confidence. He adds that Cosimo meditated flight, and that 100 horsemen were ordered to be in readiness to protect him (*Gino Capponi*, ii. 266, note; *Napier*, iii. 256).

² Battifolli's hostility to Florence met with severe retribution. After the battle of Anghiari, he and his wife and children were driven from a domain which had been held in fief by his family for 400 years. The acquisition of Count Poppi's possessions gave Florence control over the Upper Val d'Arno.

Capponi and other friends who, like most of their compatriots, regarded with jealousy and suspicion marriages between Florentine citizens and the feudal nobility.

The Florentine army, aided by a papal contingent, marched into the Casentino in pursuit of Piccinino, and completely defeated his army on June 29th, 1440, near the town of Anghiari, about four miles distant from Borgo San Sepolcro. Although the battle lasted four hours, the casualties were surprisingly few. According to the most probable account only ten of the allies and sixty of the Milanese were slain,¹ while Machiavelli says that only one man was killed.²

The battle of Anghiari extinguished the hopes of the Albizzi exiles (many of whom were with Piccinino's army) and they immediately dispersed. Rinaldo degli Albizzi took up his abode at Ancona, where, after having made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he died in 1442. He was undoubtedly a man of ability, energetic, high-spirited, and eloquent, but whether he was scrupulously upright and averse to civil war, as has been said of him by some historians, seems open to question.

After his defeat at Anghiari the Duke of Milan was disposed for peace, but the league would not listen to his overtures and the war dragged on for some months. Its continuance was indirectly a source of gain to Florence, as it so impoverished the pope that he sold to her the town of Borgo San Sepolcro for 25,000 florins.

On September 23rd, 1440, Cosimo's younger brother Lorenzo (the progenitor of the Dukes of Tuscany) died. He had not his brother's ability,³ but he was possessed of many good qualities and was much beloved by the Florentines.

In the spring of the following year the army of the league narrowly escaped destruction. Piccinino, by some masterly manœuvres, had contrived to lead it into a position from which there was no escape, but before striking the final blow he attempted to turn the situation to his personal profit. He privately communicated with the Duke, informing him that he was about to destroy his enemies and thereby make him absolute

¹ Gino Capponi, ii. 270, note.

² Machiavelli was deeply impressed with the evils of the mercenary system of warfare and was ever ready to discredit it.

³ Ammirato, v. 270. Filelfo, a venomous foe of the Medici, wrote: "Cosimo, the fox; Averardo, the wolf; Lorenzo, the cow" (Ewart's *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 170).

lord of Tuscany, and demanding for himself, as a reward, the lordship of Piacenza, at the same time intimating that if his request was refused he should allow the entrapped army to escape.¹ The Duke was so exasperated at this attempted extortion that he sent a secret messenger to the enemies' camp, offering terms of peace and once more renewing his promise to give his daughter in marriage to Sforza.² Great was Piccinino's chagrin when he found that peace had been concluded behind his back and that his prey had been snatched from his grasp.³ This time Filippo-Maria kept his word and allowed the marriage between his daughter Bianca and Francesco Sforza to be solemnised.⁴ From this union sprang Caterina Sforza, the ancestress of the line of Grand Dukes of Tuscany and of the famous Catherine de' Medici.

While this war was going on events of a different character were taking place in Florence. For some time past attempts had been made to effect a reunion between the Eastern and the Western Churches. In July, 1431, a Council of the Church had been opened at Basle, mainly for the repression of the teaching of the Hussites and the reformation of ecclesiastical discipline. The members, having fallen out with the Pope and among themselves, sought relief from an interminable wrangle by negotiating with the Greek hierarchy for a settlement of the differences which divided the two Churches. It was ultimately arranged that a Council to be attended by representatives of both Churches should be held at Ferrara. This Council sat from January 5th, 1438, to January 10th, 1439, when, ostensibly on account of an outbreak of plague, it was removed to Florence.⁵ The real object of its removal was to enable Pope Eugenius to pay the expenses of the Greek representatives, as he had been promised a loan from the Florentines for the purpose if he would bring the Council to their city.⁶ The Greek Church was represented by the Emperor John Palæologus, the Patriarch Joseph, and twenty-

¹ Ricotti's *Storia delle Compagnie di Ventura*, iii. 82.

² The Duke had had similar claims made upon him by other captains in his service. Sanseverino had asked for Novara, Dal Verme for Tortona, and Furlano for Bosco and Figaruolo.

³ Three years later Filippo-Maria again tricked Piccinino out of a certain victory over Sforza. Piccinino died shortly afterwards, it is said, heartbroken at his master's treachery.

⁴ The ceremony was performed on October 23rd, 1441.

⁵ The plague in Ferrara had ceased two months before the Council left.

⁶ Popov's *History of the Council of Florence*, p. 91.

two bishops. The Patriarch was greatly gratified by the magnificent reception accorded him by the Florentines on February 13th. The Emperor, who arrived three days later, would have received an equally splendid welcome had not the ceremony been marred by the weather.¹ The Pope took up his abode in his old quarters at S. Maria Novella. The Patriarch² was lodged in the palace of the Ferrantini (subsequently called the Casa Vernaccia), and to the Emperor and his suite were assigned the houses of the Peruzzi, which stood on sites now occupied by the Arco de' Peruzzi and Piazza de' Peruzzi. Their sojourn in Florence was commemorated some few years later by the painting of the interesting and strikingly beautiful frescoes in a chapel in the Riccardi Palace (then the Palazzo Medici) by Fra Angelico's great pupil Benozzo Gozzoli. In them the Emperor Palæologus, the Patriarch, and Lorenzo the Magnificent are represented as the three kings in a procession of the Magi.³

The conference was held in the Cathedral, and the chief points discussed related to the Procession of the Holy Ghost, the use of leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist, Purgatory, and papal authority. It commenced on March 2nd, and it became a weary theological duel between John of Montenegro, a famous Dominican theologian, and Mark of Ephesus. On July 6th a decree was published embodying articles that had been agreed to by the two Churches, and which it was thought would finally settle the differences that separated them, but it had no practical effect.⁴ It was not, however, fruitless, though its fruits were far other than were intended. It gave an impetus to the humanistic movement that was taking place in Italy, of which Florence was the centre, and which had in years to come such a momentous influence directly on the thought and taste, and indirectly on the religion, of Europe. One of the most marked characteristics of this movement was an intense admiration for the masterpieces of Greek Art, and an enthusiastic love for Greek

¹ Creighton, ii. 341. Popov gives February 15th as the day of the Emperor's entry.

² The Patriarch died in Florence on June 10th, 1439.

³ For a notice of these frescoes see Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1888), ii. 210.

⁴ The original decree is preserved in the Laurentian Library. It is commemorated by a marble tablet in the Cathedral. For detailed accounts of the proceedings, see *Studi Storici sul Concilio di Firenze*, 1869, by Cecconi, and *History of the Council of Florence* (London, 1861), by Vasily Popov, edited by Neale.

Philosophy. The advent at such a time of the representatives of the Greek Church was a matter of no small moment. Not only did it increase the intellectual and æsthetic interest in things Hellenic, but it facilitated the acquisition of countless precious manuscripts and works of art, which were lying almost unheeded in the land that gave them birth, and it attracted some of the most learned Greeks to Italy. Before long Gemistos Plethon took up his abode in Florence, and it is said that it was through conversing with him that Cosimo de' Medici was led to establish the famous Platonic Academy.¹ It would be difficult to over-estimate the influence which this Academy exercised over European thought—in Italy through Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, and in Germany through Reuchlin and his pupil Melanchthon.² By displacing Aristotle from the pedestal that he had occupied ever since the days of Scholasticism, and by stimulating a spirit of scepticism and critical inquiry, it unconsciously paved the way for the Reformation. And so the Council of Florence, which had been convened to unite the two great Churches of Christendom, only sowed the seeds of dismemberment.

Soon after the dispersion of the Council, Italy was shocked by the perpetration of an outrage in Florence, the motive of which is still shrouded in mystery. In September, 1441, Baldaccio d'Anghiari, a brave soldier who commanded the Florentine infantry in the recent wars, was inveigled into the private room of the gonfalonier, where he was assassinated and his body thrown out of the window into the Piazza. Shortly afterwards the corpse was decapitated by order of the Signory, and Baldaccio's property was declared confiscated. In order to understand what was, in all probability, the true cause of this atrocious murder, it will be necessary to glance at the ever-shifting relations between the leading Italian States. The House of Aragon had triumphed over the House of Anjou, and a *rapprochement* was taking place between Pope Eugenius IV. and Alfonso, King of Naples. Florence and Sforza, on the other hand, had not abandoned the Angevin cause, and a coolness had in consequence sprung up between her and the Pope. Moreover, the Pope was endeavouring to recover the principalities in La

¹ Among the learned Greeks who were present at this Council, Bessarion, Bishop of Nicea (who received a cardinal's hat in the following year) should be mentioned.

² Symonds, ii. 207.

Marca which he had, in an hour of need, granted to Sforza, and he was being aided in his endeavours by Filippo-Maria Visconti, who was once more jealous and distrustful of Sforza.¹ Cosimo tried to reconcile Eugenius with Sforza, but all his sympathies were with the latter, whom he desired to see established in La Marca as a check upon Alfonso.² The Pope would not be persuaded and he engaged Baldaccio to fight against Sforza and paid him 80,000 florins down. This payment was made on the day before Baldaccio was murdered, and it is generally supposed that it was the knowledge of Baldaccio's appointment that caused the Signory to contrive his assassination. Other causes have however been assigned. The Signory publicly announced that Baldaccio was put to death for having disobeyed orders during the last campaign, but this is scarcely consistent with the manner of his death. It has also been alleged that his murder was an act of private vengeance on the part of the gonfalonier Bartolommeo Orlandini who, it may be remembered, basely deserted his post in the pass of Marradi, and whose cowardice on that occasion had been publicly denounced by Baldaccio. But had this been so, the Signory would hardly have voluntarily incurred the odium of such a crime merely to screen a public official. It may however be taken as certain that, whatever was their motive, the Signory found in Orlandini an agent willing enough to do their bidding. Another explanation of the incident is that the removal of Baldaccio was a blow aimed at Neri Capponi, whose growing influence in the State was causing alarm to Cosimo and his friends.³ A close friendship existed between Neri and Baldaccio, who was so popular with the troops under his command that it was believed they would fight for him in any cause, and this friendship was viewed with suspicion by the Cosimeschi, who were apprehensive that if Neri became gonfalonier he might, with Baldaccio's assistance, overthrow their ascendancy.⁴ Cavalcanti asserts that Cosimo was privy to the transaction, and treacherously advised Baldaccio to obey without fear the gonfalonier's sum-

¹ Filippo-Maria feared that Sforza would seize his wife's inheritance.

² Cosimo sent on this mission his cousin Bernardetto, who was one of his most capable and trusted advisers.

³ Machiavelli, p. 234; Cavalcanti, ii. 160.

⁴ Cavalcanti, ii. 160. Neri Capponi was the only opponent whom Cosimo had reason to dread. "These two men were the greatest in the Republic. The one, Neri, was the wisest, and the other, Cosimo, was the richest of the citizens" (*Ibid.*, ii. 159). But Cosimo's jealousy of Neri has probably been much exaggerated, as Neri was often one of the *Accoppiatori*.

mons.¹ No other historian mentions this, and as Cavalcanti, in his later life, wrote with an evident bias against Cosimo, the story may be rejected as unworthy of credence.² But assuming, as we may do, that Cosimo was not the traitor that Cavalcanti would have us believe, it is incredible that such an important step could have been taken without his cognisance. The story is an ugly one and damaging to the reputation of all concerned. The murder of Baldaccio is said to have weakened Neri Capponi's party and caused him loss of "reputation" (the word is Machiavelli's) and friends.³ Nevertheless opposition to the Medici rule gained ground.

The term of the *Balia* that had been appointed on Cosimo's recall expired in 1444, and Cosimo did not yet feel that his authority was secure without one. The subsidies to Sforza, the abuse of the *Catasto*, and the introduction of a sliding scale into the system of taxation had impaired his popularity, and consequently his opponents had contrived to place the names of many of their own party in the election bags. It is probable, too, that he had already conceived the idea of establishing Sforza as lord of Milan, to carry out which he would require a very subservient government. He therefore obtained the appointment of a new *Balia*, but its members were nominated not as heretofore by an assembly of the people, but by the Councils. This was a distinct violation of constitutional forms and an apparent encroachment on popular rights. But the right of which the people were now deprived they had only possessed in theory, for parliament had ever been used to oppress them, and was proverbially a source of mischief.⁴ The new departure was probably impolitic, but it was at least a more honest method of choosing a *Balia* than that which had previously prevailed.

The new *Balia* appointed fresh *Accoppiatori*, re-established the

¹ Cavalcanti, pp. 161, 162.

² "Così il Cavalcanti, che scrive già in odio a Cosimo senza volere che si paresse" (Gino Capponi, ii. 277). Cippola says that the death of Baldaccio is for the most part veiled in mystery, but nobody denied his crimes or that he was worthy of death. Other authors also state that the motives of his murder are unknown. Cf. *Storia delle Signorie Italiane*, p. 474, note; *Arch. Stor.*, Ser. iii. pp. 131-166; Muratori, *R.I.S.*, xx. 544.

³ Machiavelli, p. 235. Neri was not appointed ambassador or commissioner for two years after Baldaccio's death. Subsequently his relations with Cosimo seem to have been friendly (Gino Capponi, ii. 278, 284).

⁴ There was an old proverb, *Che disse Parlamento, disse guastamento*. Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 247. Parliaments were by law abolished, at the instance of Savonarola, in 1495.

eight *Riformagioni* (Commissioners of Reforms), and filled all offices with adherents of the dominant factions.¹ The terms for which some of their opponents had been exiled in 1434 were extended, and others who were suspected of hostility to Cosimo's party were imprisoned or disfranchised.² By these means the lurking opposition to the Medicean supremacy was for a time suppressed. It required constant watchfulness, however, on Cosimo's part to maintain his position. In 1446 he had great difficulty in procuring his re-election to a seat on the Board which controlled the National Debt,³ and his foreign policy was so unpopular that he was forced to obtain the appointment of another *Balia* in 1452, which (contrary to all precedent) was appointed for an indefinite period. By this means more forced loans were raised, the jurisdiction of the *Otto di Guardia* was extended, and another ten years were added to the terms for which the exiles had been banished.⁴ It was not, however, entirely submissive to Cosimo, for in 1453 it refused for a time to allow him to nominate the members of a new *Dieci di Guerra*.

Meanwhile foreign affairs had been causing Cosimo much anxiety. Pope Eugenius left Florence in 1443, and it was well known that his departure signified an intention to seek the protection of Naples⁵ in lieu of that of Florence.⁶ With the aid of Naples and Milan he at once commenced the expedition, which he had been secretly planning while in Florence, to dispossess Sforza of the states in La Marca which he had ceded to him. In this he would probably have succeeded but for Cosimo, who not only liberally supplied Sforza with money,⁷ but contrived to temporarily detach Visconti from his alliance with Alfonso, and after some difficulty induced Venice to lend Sforza a powerful aid.

¹ Machiavelli, p. 235 ; Capponi, ii. 284. The *personnel* of the *Accoppiatori* remained for the most part unchanged during Cosimo's life. They comprised his most trusted supporters.

² Giovanni Vespucci was imprisoned and some of the Mancini, Baroncelli, Seragli, and Gianni were disfranchised.

³ This was one of the few public posts which Cosimo held all his life and, as it gave him a control over the national finances, it was of vital importance to him in his direction of foreign affairs.

⁴ This harsh decree prevented poor Palla Strozzi from ever returning to his native city.

⁵ Naples was now ruled by Florence's enemy King Alfonso.

⁶ It was solemnly debated whether or not it would not be expedient to forcibly restrain the Pope from quitting Florence.

⁷ It is said that the greater part of twelve forced loans that were raised about this time went into Sforza's pocket.

A further cause of disturbance arose when Filippo-Maria Visconti died in 1447. Having no issue he bequeathed his duchy to Alfonso, King of Naples, but the Milanese were unwilling to be thus disposed of, and a republic was proclaimed. Its establishment was not, however, effected without opposition, as besides the majority, who favoured a popular government, there were two parties in the city, one of which desired to see Sforza Duke of Milan, and another which was satisfied with the disposition made by Filippo-Maria. The new government at once found their dominions in peril of invasion by the Venetians and, with doubtful prudence, they appointed Sforza general of their forces. It was not long before he inflicted on Venice as crushing a defeat as she had ever sustained, and she at once turned to Florence for assistance. This Florence was bound to accord, as the league between the two cities was still subsisting, and she sent a contingent of some 3,000 men. It was not, however, sent willingly by Cosimo, who continued to supply Sforza with money. The Venetians, thus strengthened, thought "that it was time to treat for peace. For a long time past it had been the fortune of the Venetian Republic to lose in war and to gain by treaty; and it had often happened that they had recovered by peace twice as much as they had lost by war."¹ They were, however, uncertain whether it would be more to their advantage to treat openly with the government of Milan or secretly with Sforza. Finally, they adopted the latter course, "presuming that when the Milanese found themselves betrayed by the Count (Sforza)² they would be so angry that they would submit to any rule rather than his, and would throw themselves into the arms of Venice as the power best able to protect them."³ But the Count proved himself even a greater master of the art of diplomatic finesse than the Venetian Republic, and by a series of deceptions, and with the aid of Florentine gold, he was proclaimed Duke of Milan on February 26th, 1450.⁴

The policy of aiding Sforza in this enterprise had been warmly debated in Florence. It was contended by the Medicean party that Milan must inevitably fall into the hands of either Sforza or Venice, and that it was better that Florence should have as

¹ Machiavelli, p. 245.

² Sforza is generally alluded to as "the Count" by contemporary historians.

³ Machiavelli, p. 245.

⁴ From this date the sway of the Italian despots became milder, and they endeavoured to rule rather by craft than force (Symonds, i. 79, 80).

a neighbour a powerful friend than a still more powerful foe. The opposition, headed by Neri Capponi, urged that it would be for the interest of Florence that Milan should be maintained as a republic, for as Sforza had been troublesome when a Count he would be more troublesome when a Duke.¹ But this reasoning did not prevail, as it was thought that it arose from Neri's jealousy of Cosimo (whose power would be increased if his friend Sforza became Duke of Milan) than from Neri's deliberate judgment.

The revolution in the foreign policy of Florence, for which Cosimo had been working for so long, was now accomplished, and for many years to come Milan and not Venice was her close ally. Cosimo's coolness towards Venice possibly originated with his unsuccessful embassy to that city in 1438, ever since which time it had been increasing. During the same period his relations with Sforza had become more and more friendly. It must not be supposed, however, that the policy which he initiated was occasioned only by personal predilections. It was prompted also by a statesmanlike recognition of the changed position of affairs. The old alliance between Florence and Venice had been entered into to resist the Visconti, but Naples and not Milan was now the disturbing element in Italian politics, and it was the ambition of Alfonso that was the pressing danger. Venice, from her geographical position, had less to fear from Neapolitan than from Milanese aggression, and as her actions were ever the result of selfish considerations, Florence could not count on her aid in opposing Alfonso. Nor was there any community of interest between Florence and Venice which could form the solid basis of a permanent alliance, but, on the contrary, their commercial rivalry tended to thrust them asunder. There was, too, a continuity in the policy of Venice which made her doubly dangerous. "Tyrants greedy and cunning like Visconti, monarchs restless and ambitious like Alfonso, might arise; but they would die, and their power come to an end. Venice as a corporation never died, and she conquered always to retain."² It was in truth Venice that Cosimo feared more than Naples. But he could not look to Naples for assistance in the event of Venetian hostility, for the steady adherence of Florence to the Angevin cause had made Alfonso her enemy. Sforza, on the other hand, was under a deep debt of gratitude

¹ Machiavelli, p. 250.

² Ewart's *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 98.

to Florence, as he owed his dukedom to her aid, and he, like Florence, had incurred the hatred of Alfonso. Hence if Venice and Naples were to be prevented from obtaining a preponderating power in Italy, everything pointed to an alliance between Florence and Milan.

This was the balance of power at which Cosimo aimed, and which during the remainder of his life he succeeded in maintaining. The game had been a very uphill one. It had required much patience and skill, and Cosimo's manner of playing it shows him to have been a statesman of no mean order. It was very difficult to detach Florence from her old ally Venice, and bring her *en rapport* with her old enemy Milan. The Venetian alliance had been expensive, but it had flattered Florentine vanity. The large subsidies paid to Sforza had made Cosimo unpopular in Florence, and this had added to his difficulties with his own supporters.¹ The Neri-Capponi party had schemed for a league between Florence, Venice, and Naples to crush Sforza; but this design Cosimo frustrated, as its success would have made any balance of power impossible. It would take pages to describe the network of intrigue and counter-intrigue spreading all over Italy, and sometimes beyond the Alps, which was woven by Sforza's friends and foes to further or impede his progress from a Romagnol lordship to the dukedom of Milan.

Immediately after Sforza's triumph a revulsion of popular feeling set in, as the Florentines hoped that the ills occasioned by the long-standing enmity between Florence and Milan were now at an end. But the substitution of a Sforza for a Visconti dynasty did not at first make for peace. Neither Alfonso who claimed Milan *de jure*, nor Venice who had been foiled in her attempt to acquire it by conquest, was disposed to allow Sforza to enjoy his new dominion in quietness, and they combined to dispossess him. Florence promised him her aid, at which Venice formally remonstrated, as the league between the two states had never been abrogated. This fact is mentioned because the duty of replying to the Venetian ambassadors was entrusted to Cosimo (who held no official position at the time)

¹ It is said that the subsidies paid to Sforza out of the Florentine exchequer amounted to 25,000 florins, and that a still larger sum was paid to him out of Cosimo's private purse. In 1447 Nicodemo (Sforza's representative in Florence) wrote to his master that no man in Florence cared about Sforza's interests except Cosimo (Ewart's *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 110).

on account of his being "head of the Republic."¹ This phrase is significant, and shows the advance which the Medicean supremacy had made during the past twelve years, for in 1439, when Cosimo wished to take a prominent part while the Council was in session at Florence, he thought it necessary to procure his election as gonfalonier. After the ambassadors had left, a "Ten of War" was appointed, of which Cosimo and Neri were members. Pope Nicholas V. (Tommaso Parentucelli),² who had succeeded Eugenius IV. in March, 1447, would take no part in the contest, and exhorted all Christian States to turn their arms against the Turks, who were threatening Constantinople.

The war waged by Florence and Milan against Venice and Naples commenced in the middle of 1452, and it lasted for about two years, without any permanent advantage accruing to either side. Peace was finally concluded at Lodi in April, 1454, through the intervention of the Pope, who was preaching a crusade against Islam. He at length succeeded in forming a league between the leading Italian States for the purpose of recovering Constantinople, which had fallen in 1453, but he did not live to see even the commencement of military operations. He died on March 24th, 1455, and was succeeded by Calixtus III.,³ who continued his policy. By way of awakening enthusiasm against the Turk, processions were organised which paraded the streets of many Italian cities. That in Florence is said to have numbered 6,000 "men and women, boys and girls, all clothed in white, with a red cross on their shoulders, singing and chanting psalms as they went."⁴ Florence, desiring to appear foremost in zeal among the States of Christendom, was lavish in advice and promises of men and money. But this enthusiasm soon expended itself, and no active measures were taken for the expulsion of the Turks.

¹ "*Capo della Repubblica*" (Ammirato, v. 318).

² He had been private tutor to the sons of Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Palla Strozzi. He was an eminent scholar and bibliophile, and he assisted Cosimo in the formation of his library at S. Marco.

³ Alfonso Borgia, who by his nepotism paved the way for the election to the papacy of his relative Roderigo, the infamous Alexander VI.

⁴ Cambi, *Deliz. Erud. Tosc.*, xx. 334.

CHAPTER XIV

1457-1464

COSIMO DE' MEDICI'S CLOSING YEARS—LUCA PITTI—DEATH,
METHODS OF GOVERNMENT, AND CHARACTER OF COSIMO DE'
MEDICI

WHEN the contemplated crusade against the Turks was abandoned, Florence, being at peace with her neighbours, had nothing to distract her attention from internal affairs, and, as was usual at such times, dissensions arose among her politicians. There was much disaffection among Cosimo's followers. In 1457 Neri Capponi died, and with his death all appreciable opposition to the Medicean rule disappeared.¹ "A successful faction," says Machiavelli, "only remained united as long as an opposing faction existed, but when opposition was extinguished, it fell to pieces through lack of restraining fear and organisation"; and he proceeds to instance Cosimo's government in support of his assertion. The disaffection first showed itself in a formal demand on Cosimo, by some of his friends, for the abolition of the *Balia*. Many of the Mediceans had only assented to the suspension of representative government as a means of maintaining their own ascendancy. They had, in fact, only tolerated the *Balia* as an instrument for quelling opposition, and a desire for its discontinuance, now that opposition had ceased, did not seem unreasonable. The proceeding was, however, a blow aimed at Cosimo's supremacy. A less sagacious man than he would have refused the demand and asserted his authority by force of arms. Cosimo determined to teach his followers that it was they, rather than he, who benefited by the existing régime.² With his sanction the *Balia* was dissolved, and a Signory was elected in

¹ Machiavelli (p. 270) erroneously assigns Neri's death to 1455. He may have become infirm and retired from public life in that year. He made a codicil to his will in 1456, which perhaps points to illness.

² Machiavelli, p. 270.

accordance with ancient usage. Events turned out as he anticipated. Many wealthy citizens had recently, as in times past, been evading payment of their fair share of taxation by a corrupt use of the *catasto*, and one of the first acts of the reformed government was to check this abuse. No sooner had this been done than the very persons who had clamoured for the abolition of the *Balia* came to Cosimo, cap in hand, and petitioned for its re-establishment. He expressed his willingness to grant their request, provided it could be effected by constitutional means. The proposal was then submitted to an universal assembly of the people, and of course rejected. Once more the petitioners appeared before Cosimo, and humbly besought him to carry out their wishes by means of a *parlamento*, by which they meant that he should procure, by armed intervention, a sham popular assent to the appointment of a *Balia*. Cosimo emphatically declined to be a party to any such proceeding, and when the gonfalonier, Matteo Bartoli,¹ notwithstanding such refusal, presumed to make a similar proposal to the Signory, Cosimo made him appear so ridiculous that he left the room in confusion.

Four months later the gonfaloniership fell to Luca Pitti (a man of very different calibre from poor Matteo Bartoli), who for the next few years played a foremost part in Florentine affairs. He was a bold, vain, and presumptuous man, fond of the chief seat in assemblies and of greetings in the market-place, who owed his influence more to great wealth than force of character. He entered office in July, and soon after he convened an assembly of the people, and endeavoured to induce them by persuasion to appoint a *Balia*, but without success. Thereupon he convened a second *parlamento* and, following the old evil precedents, "having filled the palace with armed men he constrained the people by force to consent to what they had refused to grant voluntarily."² Machiavelli thinks that this was done with the consent of Cosimo, who desired a *Balia*, but preferred that the odium of its re-establishment should fall upon Luca rather than upon himself. It should be remembered, however, that Cosimo was old and infirm and, as subsequent events proved, quite unable to control the headstrong Luca.

¹ Ammirato, v. 348. Machiavelli (p. 271) tells the story of Donato Cocchi, but he was gonfalonier in 1456 (Reumont's *Tavole*, p. 35).

² Machiavelli, p. 271.

The government that was thus forcibly foisted on the people remained in office for eight years. It was Luca, and not Cosimo, who now virtually ruled the city.¹ If Cosimo had chastised his opponents with whips Luca chastised them with scorpions. Five citizens were beheaded, eighteen were banished, forty of the exiles were proclaimed rebels, and some of the illustrious families who had been driven out of the city in 1434 had another twenty-five years added to their terms of exile.² As a sop to the people the name of the priors, who had hitherto been called "*Priori delle Arti*" (heads of the trading guilds), was changed to "*Priori di Liberta*," so that "they might at least preserve the name of the thing that they had lost."³ But notwithstanding his acts of oppression, Luca Pitti was courted by everyone. He had presents showered upon him, he was beset by petitioners, his house was thronged with visitors, and the first place was given to him on all public occasions. He became so arrogant that, as Ammirato says, "he dared to commence the erection of two houses, one within and one without the city, that were more suitable for a king than a private citizen."⁴ This was a great cause of offence, and helped to impair Luca's popularity, as the Florentines invariably looked askance at any citizen who built for himself a house of unusual size or splendour. Luca's conduct in this matter throws into relief the difference of character between himself and Cosimo. When Cosimo was contemplating building his new house in the Via Larga⁵ he rejected Brunelleschi's design on the ground that it was too magnificent, and selected a less pretentious one by Michelozzo Michelozzi.⁶ The huge mansion in Florence which Luca was at this time commencing is still known as the Palazzo Pitti.

The next four years (1460-1464) were comparatively uneventful. Cosimo was leading a retired life, and Luca's popularity was waning. Florence, following the prudent example of Venice, refused to embroil herself in the Neapolitan war of succession. But though she thus escaped expenditure for military purposes,

¹ Machiavelli, p. 272.

² The Castellani, Bardi, Ardinghelli, Belfradelli, Strozzi, Peruzzi, Guasconi, Rondinelli, Brancacci, Guadagni, and Baldovinetti.

³ Machiavelli, p. 272.

⁴ These words were prophetic, as one of them is now a royal palace.

⁵ Now the Via Cavour. The house is now the Palazzo Riccardi.

⁶ Brunelleschi, in a pet, destroyed his plans on hearing that they had been rejected.

there were large drains on her exchequer for civil hospitality. Pope Pius II. (*Ænæas Piccolomini*) and Galeazzo-Maria Sforza, the son and heir of Francesco, visited Florence at the same time, and were royally entertained. The Pope was carried by four nobles, in a litter covered with silk brocade, from one of the city gates to his quarters in S. Maria Novella. The Mercato Nuovo was converted into a temporary stage, draped with arras, on which sixty youths and as many beautiful girls, belonging to the most distinguished Florentine families, danced for the amusement of a vast concourse of spectators. The dresses of the performers, which were repeatedly changed, were richly adorned with pearls and precious stones. There was another costly scenic show in which twelve Florentine youths took part, among whom was Lorenzo de' Medici, then a youth of eleven years old. In the Piazza della Signoria there was a grand "hunt" (or rather a baiting of wild animals) and a tournament. All the noble guests in the city were entertained at a banquet in the Palazzo Vecchio, and young Sforza was presented with silver ewers and goblets which cost the Signory 2,000 florins. Alluding to the special ceremonies in honour of Pope Pius, Cambi says "the business was characterised by pride and not by holiness, and it cost us a treasure."¹

On August 1st, 1464, Cosimo died at his beautiful villa at Careggi, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. Since his recall from exile, in 1434, fortune had generally smiled on him, but the last years of his life were not unclouded. The overbearing conduct of the Pitti faction caused him much anxiety, and he had misgivings as to the capacity of his son Piero to curb their "headstrong and uncontrolled wickedness." Piero had been a martyr to gout from his youth, and he had as yet given no sign of the mental ability which he undoubtedly possessed. Cosimo's favourite son, Giovanni, on whom his hopes for the maintenance of the family greatness rested, died childless in 1463. It was on hearing the news of Giovanni's death that Cosimo, while being carried through his new palace,² pathetically exclaimed, "This house is too large for so small a family."³ The failure to add Lucca to the Florentine territory was, too, a bitter disappointment to him, and it was aggravated by a sense of Sforza's in-

¹ Cited by Trollope, iii. 211.

² Now the Palazzo Riccardi.

³ Machiavelli, p. 276.

gratitude.¹ When on his deathbed he had a conversation with Piero on affairs of state, but the stilted oration—half platitudes and half cant—which Bruto puts into his mouth on that occasion, must be dismissed as the coinage of the historian's brain. He was buried on August 2nd in the church of San Lorenzo, and by his special request the funeral ceremonies were conducted without pomp. But the people were determined to honour him after his death, and the name of "Pater Patriæ," by which he had been hailed on his return from exile, was, by public decree, ordered to be inscribed on his tomb.

The place which Cosimo de' Medici made for himself in the world of Florentine politics—the almost absolute authority which he wielded during the greater part of his life while a mere citizen—is probably without parallel in history. Unlike his son Piero and his grandson Lorenzo, he entered public life without any hereditary claim to be regarded as *Capo della Repubblica*, for his father, Giovanni, though a very influential citizen, was hardly more prominent than Rinaldo degli Albizzi or Niccolò da Uzzano. He never possessed any of that power which is conferred by title or office. He was not a "Consul" like Julius Cæsar, or "Protector" like Cromwell. He was but twice gonfalonier during thirty years, and the only post which he held for a long period was a seat on the Board that controlled the National Debt. And yet, as Pius II. (Æneas Sylvius) truly wrote of him, he was a king in all but the name.² The secret of his success was threefold. It lay in the combined influence of his Personality, his Wealth, and his Astuteness. He was endowed in a rare degree with that faculty which distinguishes the ἀνὴρ ἀνδρῶν from the crowd—that subtle and altogether inexplicable force which gives to its possessor a mental ascendancy over the mass of those with whom he is brought into contact. He inherited from his father a fortune of 179,221 golden florins, and this he enormously increased by an unusual aptitude for business.³ And his astuteness enabled him to direct his personal influence and to employ his vast wealth to the best possible advantage. This astuteness showed itself in many ways, but

¹ It is said that Sforza evaded a promise that if he became Duke of Milan he would aid Cosimo in acquiring Lucca.

² "So you think you are a Cosimo de' Medici?" was a proverbial retort to boasters.

³ His brother Lorenzo, who was in partnership with him, was on his death, in 1440, worth 435,137 florins (Burckhardt, p. 80).

above all, in his thorough knowledge of the Florentine character, and in his complete realisation of the only conditions under which Florence could be well and safely governed by a single individual. He never lost sight of the fact that his fellow-citizens were more jealous of the apparent than of the actual possession of power, and that they viewed with a resentment, which sometimes grew to hatred, all who assumed any outward signs of superiority. He might, had he been so minded, have made himself lord of Florence by force after his recall from exile.¹ But he was too wise to do so, for he realised that if Florence was to be driven it must be by a driver of her own choice, and that even then it was impossible unless the hands that held the whip and reins were partially concealed. The problems, therefore, that he had to solve were, first, How to veil his authority, and second, How to retain his popularity.

1. The solution of the first would have been impossible without his strong personality. This enabled him to keep in the background while he directed the policy of the State through others. By carefully selecting those who were susceptible of his influence, or in some way beholden to him, and artfully placing them in office, he was enabled to impress his will on assemblies of which he was not a member, while he avoided awakening those jealousies which had shipwrecked aspirants to the titular lordship of Florence.² All offices of importance were filled by members of his party, and the ten *Accoppiatori*, who managed the elections, comprised his most faithful adherents.³ He was quick at detecting intelligence, and able men of humble birth (such as Puccio Pucci) were promoted to responsible posts. In them he found willing and useful instruments. Those of his opponents who were not banished on his recall were, by fair means or foul, excluded from all share in the government. Neri Capponi, the only man in whom he saw a possible rival, was kept almost constantly employed on foreign embassies.⁴

¹ Guicciardini.

² One instance of this may be given. He wished Donato Acciaiuoli's name to be placed among the candidates for the gonfaloniership, and when at a meeting of the *Accoppiatori* the member to whom he had mentioned the matter said "It is Cosimo's wish," it was done as a matter of course (Ewart's *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 188).

³ They were called by his opponents "The ten tyrants."

⁴ In this Cosimo was acting on a maxim of Neri Capponi's father Gino, that "he who wishes a great position in his native city should not leave it too often."

Cosimo's knowledge of the temper of his fellow-countrymen also displayed itself in minor matters. Avoiding a mistake that Corso Donati had made, he refused to allow his son Piero to wed the daughter of a feudal lord,¹ and (wiser than Luca Pitti) he rejected Brunelleschi's plan for his new palace in the Via Larga, on the ground that it was too magnificent. "Envy is a plant that should not be watered" he is reported to have said, and it is a maxim on which he invariably acted.

2. There can be no doubt that Cosimo's popularity was largely maintained and his influence increased by his successful administration of foreign affairs. In speaking of the Medici, Guicciardini says that "all their affairs depended on the power and reputation of the Republic; in its exaltation and prosperity lay their exaltation and prosperity, because when it was greatest they were most powerful."² This was well known to Cosimo, and so it was unnecessary to pursue the same tactics in his foreign policy as those which guided him in his conduct of home affairs. Here he made no pretence of taking others into his counsel, and no attempt to mask the power that he was wielding; indeed, having regard to the delicate and intricate nature of the negotiations which he had to carry on, and to the necessity for secrecy, it would have been almost impossible to have done so. At any rate, as far as Cosimo's popularity went, it was unnecessary, for any jealousy that his conduct in this particular might arouse, was more than counterbalanced by the credit that he obtained for having increased the prestige of the Republic.

Another contributory cause of his popularity was the judicious expenditure of his great wealth.³ Few men have ever lived who better understood the value of money in the acquisition of power.⁴ He used it to allure, to reward, and to chastise. By draining Venice and Naples of gold he forced them to make peace when at war with Florence and Milan, and by means of the ramifying

¹ He subsequently married his son Piero to Lucrezia Tornabuoni. His grand-daughters Bianca and Nannina he respectively married to Guglielmo de' Pazzi and Bernardo Rucellai. All of these alliances were with families of Florentine merchants. An interesting account of the festivities on the marriage of Bernardo and Nannina is given in Biagi's *Private Life of the Renaissance Florentines*, pp. 67-77.

² Ewart's *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 187.

³ The Medicean wealth was chiefly derived from banking, but they carried on extensive mercantile transactions, especially with the East; they owned large landed estates and were interested in lucrative alum mines.

⁴ Symonds, ii. 169.

influence of the Medici Bank, individuals who opposed him rarely escaped financial losses.¹ He paid the taxes of numbers of his supporters to save their names from appearing on the *Specchio*. By judiciously advancing money on loan he increased the loyalty of his friends and conciliated his foes. It is said that at his death there was hardly an influential citizen who was not under some pecuniary obligation to him.² His liberality and munificence were almost unbounded. He gave away large sums in charity and expended still more in the erection of splendid public buildings.³ Of these the most important were the convent of San Marco in Florence, the Badia at Fiesole, an abbey in the Mugello, and a Hostel for Pilgrims at Jerusalem.⁴ He also added to and beautified the churches of San Miniato, Santa Croce, the Servi, and San Lorenzo. And his buildings were designed by the first architects and decorated by the first artists of the day. So conscious was he of the influence which he had gained by his munificence, that he was heard to say he had committed a great error of judgment in not having commenced spending money freely earlier in life.

His enlightened patronage of Art and Learning, however, probably enhanced his reputation, at least among the educated, even more than his liberality. He was a collector of statues, gems, and coins. He enjoined not only his business correspondents, but friends, missionaries, and preachers who travelled into the remotest countries, to search for and procure ancient manuscripts in every language and on every subject,⁵ and it often happened that a cargo of Indian spices and Greek books were shipped to him in the same vessel.⁶ He kept in his employ an army of copyists, and he established libraries at the convents of San Marco and Fiesole which, together with his private collections, formed the foundation of the great Laurentian library at Florence. Though not an eminent scholar he was widely read and was in complete sympathy with the intellectual movement of his age.⁷ He could converse intelligently on philosophy,

¹ Machiavelli, p. 274.

² *Ibid.*, 273.

³ It is said that the sums which he expended during his life on buildings, charities, and taxes amounted to 400,000 florins.

⁴ Vespasiano says that Cosimo built churches to relieve a conscience that was uneasy at the questionable manner in which his wealth had been obtained (Reumont, i. 158).

⁵ Roscoe, i. 37.

⁶ Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1783-1790), xii. 136.

⁷ His patronage of literature was not however so complete or sympathetic as that of his grandson. Lorenzo would not have exiled Palla Strozzi, have

theology, and astrology, and he was a consummate judge of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. His palace was the centre of literary and artistic society when the intellectual life in Florence was even more brilliant than in any other city of that brilliant period. He readily discerned rising genius, and "he was always the father and benefactor of those who showed any excellence."¹ Of all the great artists of the day Donatello seems to have been his favourite, and him he constantly employed and treated as a friend. He formed a close intimacy with Fra Angelico, and to Lippo Lippi he showed great kindness. The influence of the Platonic Academy which he formed has already been noticed. Burckhardt thinks that the spell which Cosimo exercised over Florence lay less in his political capacity than in his leadership of the culture of the age. "A man of Cosimo's position," he says, "a great merchant and party leader, who also had on his side all the thinkers, writers, and investigators, a man who was the first of Florentines by birth and the first of Italians by culture—such a man was to all intents and purposes already a prince."²

Such were the principal methods by which Cosimo secured favour and consolidated his party, but he did not neglect other, and sometimes more questionable means. He occasionally organised public spectacles and festivities when visitors of distinction sojourned in Florence, which served the double purpose of pleasing the lower orders and impressing foreigners with the extent of Florentine wealth. And those who could not be attracted to his side were often persecuted. It was said of him that he used taxes in the place of a dagger. The most flagrant instance of this was the case of the brilliant scholar Giannozzo Manetti, who was required to pay 135,000 florins in taxes for showing too independent a spirit, and forced in consequence to quit Florence. A still more objectionable practice, which though not introduced by Cosimo he took no steps to amend, was the maladministration of justice in the criminal courts, where the Mediceans, however guilty, were sure, if not of acquittal, at least of lenient treatment.³

driven Giannozzo Manetti out of Florence by persecution, or have allowed Agnolo Pandolfini to quit it in disgust.

¹ Vespasiano, cited in Symonds, ii. 175-177.

² Burckhart, p. 220. It is, however, hardly correct to say that he was the first of Florentines by birth.

³ It is probable, however, that the Florentine courts at this period were not more corrupt than those of other European States.

Crafty and unscrupulous as Cosimo occasionally showed himself he possessed many qualities which command admiration, and he does not merit to be described as "a cynical self-seeking bourgeois tyrant."¹ His remarks were occasionally caustic, but he was no cynic. He never spoke ill of anyone himself and it displeased him to hear others spoken ill of in his presence. Self-seeking he may have been in the sense that all ambitious men are, but he sought at the same time his country's good, and during his life the prosperity of Florence and of the Medici advanced hand in hand. It would be difficult to point to a single instance where he deliberately subordinated patriotism to self-interest. Like almost every distinguished Florentine of his day he was of bourgeois extraction, but the stigma that that word implies does not attach to men of his tastes and culture. It is true that he could adopt harsh measures when he deemed them necessary, but he was of a kindly nature. He was averse to bloodshed, and no Italian despot ever maintained his supremacy for so long a period to whose charge fewer crimes can be laid. If he was a tyrant some other word must be coined for Ezzelino da Romana, Bernabò Visconti, and Cesare Borgia. His avoidance of ostentation was not only a matter of policy, but arose from a genuine dislike of display, and, unlike his fellow-citizens, he had a contempt for the mere show of power. Players and jugglers found little favour with him, and the only game in which he indulged was chess and that only after dinner. His love of Art and Letters was natural, and not merely assumed to enhance his reputation. He was said to be as avaricious of time as Midas was of gold, and though he had so much business to transact he never let it overwhelm him, and he seemed to have nothing to do.

Some writers deny him all nobility of nature, but they for the most part belong to the class who seem unable to write the name *Medici* without having first dipped their pens in gall.² These allege that his generosity and every apparent virtue were assumed for some base or unworthy end. Had this been so Ficino would hardly have written of him "I owe to Plato much, to Cosimo no less. He realised for me the virtues of which Plato gave me the conception."

¹ Symonds, *Sketches and Studies in Italy*, p. 141.

² Notably Cavalcanti (in his later writings), Sismondi, Napier, Trollope, and Perrens. Symonds' picture of Cosimo in his *Sketches and Studies in Italy* is far from fair.

Cosimo has also been accused by his opponents with having undermined the liberties of his native city,¹ or in the words of another writer with having "thimble-rigged" them away.² This charge can hardly be intended to apply to the changes which he introduced into the form of the constitution, which were few and substantially unimportant. It is true that they gave the government a somewhat less representative appearance. But the people had not, for well-nigh two hundred years before Cosimo's day, really had a voice in the election of the magistrates. Florence, with all her vaunted democracy, had never known real freedom. The Councils, nominally elected by popular vote, had in fact been corruptly chosen by a small coterie, and even the parliament was but a packed meeting where every dissentient voice was silenced by intimidation. In spite of the almost countless changes in her constitution, she had seldom possessed a government which for a single decade could effectively protect the lives or liberties of her citizens. Cosimo can only be justly charged with having deprived the people of a small semblance of liberty, while he gave them a stable and efficient government. There is no doubt that the populace fully realised this. They were wearied of perpetual constitutional changes, of never-ceasing party strife, of turmoil, banishments, and bloodshed. Had it been otherwise Cosimo's popularity—and as a consequence Cosimo's rule—would have been at an end.

How far his dominating personality and the use he made of his wealth in extending his influence may have enervated or corrupted the national character it is impossible to say. For the former he can scarcely be held responsible, and as regards the latter it may fairly be urged that there was not much room for a further degradation of political morality. "A town to sell if it can find a purchaser" was said of Florence about this time, and it may be that Cosimo's systematic bribery did but manifest a pre-existing corruption. But even if this is not so, it was not, as some have argued, owing to the insidious working of Medicean methods that when (as happened on Lorenzo's death) no strong and popular ruler could be found, Florence was unable to revert to free institutions. The answer to this contention is that these so-called free institutions, of which historians make such a parade, had not succeeded. The countless experiments which Florence made in representative government, notwithstanding the ingenuity

¹ Symonds, ii. 168.

² Trollope, iii. 145.

and honesty of her attempts to ensure their success, had all failed. The truth is that these experiments had been premature. Representative government failed in Florence, not through the wiliness of the Medici, but because her citizens, brilliant and intellectual as they were, had not acquired those habits of self-control, or reached that stage of moral development, which is the only sure foundation on which that form of government can rest.

CHAPTER XV

1464-1469

PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI—ANTI-MEDICEAN CONSPIRACY—
THE DEL POGGIO AND DEL PIANO PARTIES—DEATH AND
CHARACTER OF PIERO DE' MEDICI

ON the death of Pius II., which occurred seventeen days after that of Cosimo, the ill-considered expedition against the Turks was abandoned, and the period of general peace that ensued left the Florentines at liberty to scramble for the heritage of power which Cosimo had left to an heir who was supposed to be unequal to wield it. Piero, Cosimo's eldest son, had from his youth been a martyr to gout, and he was in consequence surnamed *Il Gottoso* (the Gouty). During his father's life he had been sent as ambassador to Milan and to Venice, and he had served as prior in 1448, and as gonfalonier in 1461.¹ He would probably have taken a still more prominent part in public life but for ill health.

Luca Pitti, who was as vain as he was ambitious, was unwilling to rule as Piero's lieutenant, and he was aided in his designs by three men who, for different reasons, also desired to overthrow the Medicean supremacy. These were Agnolo Acciaiuoli, Dietisalvi Neroni, and Niccolò Soderini, all of whom had been at one time Cosimo's firm friends.

In early life Agnolo Acciaiuoli was one of the most prominent of the Cosimeschi. After the recall of Cosimo he was frequently employed on important embassies, and though Louis XI. pronounced him to be "light and loquacious," he was held in some estimation at home.² His rupture with his party was prompted by personal motives. One of his sons had been re-

¹ Litta. He was the last of the House of Medici who held the post of gonfalonier.

² Perren's *History of Florence* (London, 1892), i. 234. He either fled from Florence, or was banished at the time of Cosimo's exile.

fused the archbishopric of Florence, which had been given to Filippo de' Medici, and in a dispute between the Acciaiuoli and Bardi respecting a bride's dowry, in which Cosimo had acted as arbitrator, the award had been in favour of the Bardi.¹ The betrothal of Piero de' Medici's daughter Nannina to Bernardo Rucellai had also caused Agnolo much disappointment, as he had expected that she would have been given in marriage to one of his own sons. Dietisalvi Neroni was a wealthy and influential citizen, and far more astute than either Luca Pitti or Agnolo Acciaiuoli.² He had been Cosimo's most trusted adviser both in his public and private affairs, and it was on his judgment that Cosimo had, in his last illness, counselled his son Piero to lean.³ While professing to aid Luca Pitti he was secretly working to make himself *capo della Repubblica*. Niccolò Soderini's defection from the Medicean ranks was at first entirely disinterested. He honestly desired for his country a government that was republican in something more than the name,⁴ but he was a dreamer of dreams and not a practical politician.

Piero, guided by his father's wishes, placed all the books relating to the financial business of the Medici firm in the hands of Dietisalvi Neroni, with a request that he would examine them. Neroni did so, and reported to Piero that his affairs were in a critical condition, and recommended that all outstanding loans should be immediately called in. On this perfidious advice Piero acted, with the result that Neroni intended. As there was hardly a man of any position in the city to whom Cosimo had not lent money, the demand for payment cost Piero all the popularity which he, as his father's son, had possessed. Many bankruptcies ensued, and Piero undeservedly earned a reputation for harshness and avarice.⁵

The four conspirators now thought that they had the game in their hands, and it is possible that they would have triumphed could they have agreed on a common course of action. But

¹ Gino Capponi, ii. 332.

² Guicciardini, p. 18.

³ This is a remarkable instance of how a man gifted with unusual sagacity, as Cosimo was, is occasionally mistaken in the character of his friends, and is blind to what others see in them. A year before Cosimo's death the Milanese ambassador wrote of Dietisalvi Neroni: "Cosimo and his people have no greater, no more ambitious, enemy than he" (Ewart's *Cosimo de' Medici*, p. 181).

⁴ Gino Capponi, ii. 333.

⁵ This is Machiavelli's story, which is accepted by Gino Capponi (ii. 332, 333). Bruto, invariably hostile to the Medici, endeavours to exculpate Dietisalvi (Napier, iii. 347).

Luca and his immediate followers desired an armed insurrection, aided by the troops of the Marquis of Ferrara, while Niccolò Soderini and his friends were averse to violent or unconstitutional measures.¹

The period for which the last *Balla* had been appointed was about to expire, and the Soderini faction urged that if no new one were appointed Piero's authority and reputation would evaporate. This they thought would damage his credit with business men, and that as he would be unable to help himself out of the public funds his ruin was inevitable.² The counsels of the moderate reformers prevailed, and they were full of hope when at the end of 1465 Niccolò Soderini became gonfalonier.³ He was escorted to his official residence wearing an olive wreath. He called together 500 citizens and harangued them with much eloquence on the situation, but his hearers were unable to agree upon any reforms. He then advocated before the Signory that the public expenditure during the past few years should be investigated, but his motion was rejected, mainly through the opposition of his friend Luca Pitti, who feared to face such an inquiry. A proposal that the election bags should be refilled met with no better fate. When his retirement from office was approaching he had effected nothing; nevertheless he desired that he might be knighted, and though the *Consiglio del Popolo* consented, the *Consiglio del Comune* refused his request. Tommaso Soderini's prophecy that his brother would come in like a lion and go out like a lamb was in a sense falsified, for Niccolò quitted office a disappointed man, and abandoning his former moderation he became one of the most uncompromising opponents of the Medici.

Niccolò Soderini's failure strengthened Piero's position,⁴ but it was soon afterwards weakened by the death of his father's old friend and supporter Francesco Sforza, which happened in March, 1466. The subsidy to Francesco, as has been mentioned, had given rise to much discontent, and the conspirators now determined to make a refusal to continue it to his son

¹ Niccolò's brother Tommaso was a brother-in-law of Piero and a staunch supporter of the Medici. He was possessed of more solid qualities than Niccolò, on whom it is probable that he exercised a moderating influence.

² Machiavelli, 282.

³ Reumont's *Tavole*. Trollope gives March, 1467, as the date of his accession to office, but it was Tommaso Soderini who was then gonfalonier.

⁴ Machiavelli, p. 283.

Galeazzo-Maria the platform on which their opposition to Piero should be based. This question they raised at the Councils, where it was hotly discussed, and the city became divided into two hostile camps. Luca and his friends were called the party *del Poggio* (of the mountain) because the Pitti Palace was on a hill-side, and the adherents of Piero, whose palace in the Via Larga¹ was on the flat, were known as the party *del Piano*.

There was much to be said for the discontinuance of the subsidy, for Galeazzo-Maria was young and without ability, and it was not likely that his personal support would be of service to Florence. But the real question at issue was whether the foreign policy which Cosimo had initiated should be continued, or whether Florence should revert to her traditional attitude of hostility towards Milan. This was a matter of great importance not only to the Medici and Florence, but to the whole of Italy. The triple alliance between Florence, Milan, and Naples which Cosimo had with difficulty formed, and which was still subsisting, was not only a support to the house of Medici, but was a guarantee for the peace of the whole peninsula. If Florence had now deserted Galeazzo-Maria, Venice and Naples would in all probability have renewed their claims to Milan which they had asserted when it fell into Francesco's hands.

Now that Niccolò Soderini's opposition to violent measures was withdrawn, Luca Pitti had no difficulty in persuading his party to attempt to overthrow the Medicean supremacy by force. The *del Poggio* party opened negotiations with Venice, but the Venetians did not at first respond to their appeal. A promise of armed assistance was, however, obtained from Borso, Marquis of Ferrara. But before arrangements for a rising were complete the plot was divulged by Niccolò Fideni (the secretary of the *del Poggio* party), who communicated to Piero the names of all who were implicated. Piero took no active measure for its suppression, and contented himself with obtaining the signatures of all who were prepared to support him. But the mere knowledge that he was aware of their design made the *del Poggio* party hold their hand for a time.

Before long, however, another plot was on foot, and this time it was determined to seize the government by a *coup d'état* and to put Piero to death. Once more the particulars of the plot were revealed by Fideni to Piero, who now displayed much

¹ Now the Via Cavour.

decision and energy. Though he was seriously ill at Careggi, he started at once for Florence in a litter. It is probable that he would have lost his life but for the promptness and courage of his young son Lorenzo, who, on hearing from some peasants that a body of armed men had been seen on the road between Careggi and Florence, along which his father was about to be carried, hastened back, and having persuaded his father to take a more circuitous route, he rode himself along the direct road, and when he encountered the assassins he informed them that his father was but a short way behind him.¹ This occurred on August 23rd, on which day Piero reached Florence in safety, and he lost no time in preparing for a conflict with his adversaries. He collected a large body of armed followers; he sent for assistance to one of the Duke of Milan's captains, who happened to be in Romagna with 2,500 cavalry; and he laid before the Signory a letter from Giovanni Bentivoglio,² announcing that an armed force under Ercole d'Este was marching towards Florence. The leaders of the *del Poggio* party thereupon armed their supporters, but they hesitated to attack their opponents until the arrival of the Ferrarese contingent. Niccolò Soderini, who seems to have gone from one extreme to the other, was alone in favour of taking action. He marched at the head of 200 men to the Palazzo Pitti, and urged on Luca the expediency of compelling the Signory by force to call a parliament for the appointment of a new *Balia*. Luca, however, was unmoved by his arguments, and Soderini left him in anger, telling him that his inaction would ruin them both and deprive their country of liberty. It seems that Luca, realising the weakness of his situation, had, before this interview, entered into secret negotiations with Piero, who had bought off his opposition with the promise of a marriage between his son Lorenzo de' Medici and one of Luca's daughters.

Nor could Piero be persuaded to strike the first blow, although his force was more numerous than that of his opponents, so the two parties remained under arms, but inactive, until August 28th, on which day a new Signory was nominated. The members of

¹ Neither Machiavelli nor Guicciardini mention this incident. It is given by Niccolò Valori in his *Life of Lorenzo*, and repeated by Bruto (see Napier, iii. 354) and Ammirato (v. 365). M. Perrens rejects it, but it is accepted by Gino Capponi (vol. ii. p. 340), and apparently by Mr. Armstrong (p. 58).

² Machiavelli says that this letter was a forgery, but Ammirato believes that it was genuine. It matters but little, as the news of d'Este's approach was undoubtedly true.

the incoming and outgoing Signories met and summoned the leaders of both sides to appear before them, and required them to disband their forces. Luca, recognising that the tide of fortune was turning against him—for the new government contained a Medicean majority—on the following day, accompanied by some of his friends, visited Piero in his bedroom, and a reconciliation between them was effected. Soderini, who had not been present at this interview, made a final attempt to persuade the vacillating Luca to aid him in procuring by force the appointment of a *Balia* before the new Signory entered office on September 1st. Luca either was, or feigned to be, moved by Soderini's reasoning; he sent a despatch to Ercole d'Este urging him to hasten his coming; and he assured his followers that Soderini's proposal was about to be carried out. But Luca, either from timidity or treachery, abandoned the project and left his friends to their fate.¹

The new Signory no sooner came into office than they condemned to death Luca Pitti, Niccolò Soderini, Agnolo Acciaiuoli, and Dietisalvi Neroni.² But Piero, like his father, was neither bloodthirsty nor vindictive, and he procured a mitigation of the sentence.³ Three of them were banished. Agnolo Acciaiuoli ended his days at Naples.⁴ Niccolò Soderini went to Ravenna, and died there in 1474. Dietisalvi Neroni, after sixteen years' exile, died at Rome, where his tombstone may be seen in the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva. Luca Pitti, the traitor to his party, was pardoned, but his punishment proved the most severe. He passed the remainder of his life avoided and despised. Workmen refused to be employed by him, and his colossal palace remained unfinished. The Medici repudiated the promised

¹ Ammirato (v. 369) says that Luca was persuaded to desert Soderini by young Lorenzo, but Machiavelli makes no mention of this. Trollope (iii. 243) thinks that Luca's despatch to d'Este was sent with Piero's connivance in order that the *del Poggio* party might merit more severe punishment; but this is hardly consistent with Piero's subsequent conduct, or indeed with what we know of his character.

² A most important measure was passed by the *Balia* appointed at this time. On September 6th it was enacted that the Signory should for the next ten years be appointed, not by lot as hitherto, but by electors nominated by the Council of the Hundred.

³ Some of those who had been previously exiled were at this time recalled, chief among whom was Filippo Strozzi, a cousin of Palla Strozzi.

⁴ Vespasiano says that if Agnolo Acciaiuoli had not fled before his sentence he would have been pardoned by Piero. He at first went to Rome, where, in conjunction with Dietisalvi's brother Giovanni (the Archbishop of Florence), he greatly injured the credit of the Medici Bank.

alliance between his daughter and Lorenzo. "When he appeared in the streets his friends and relations were not only afraid to accompany him, but even to salute him . . . so that now, when it was too late, he began to repent himself that he had not taken Niccolò Soderini's advice and died honourably, sword in hand, rather than live dishonoured among victorious foes."¹

Piero was not cast in the mould of Machiavelli's ideal Prince, or he would not have interfered with the sentence of the Signory. It was no doubt magnanimous on his part to prevent the law from taking its course in the punishment of men who had deliberately planned his death, but it would have been better for his country had he not done so. Niccolò Soderini and Dietisalvi Neroni betook themselves to Venice, and by expatiating on the injury which that city had sustained through the Sforza-Medici alliance, they induced the Venetian government to make war on Florence.²

The Venetian army, some 16,000 strong,³ under the command of the famous Bartolommeo Colleoni⁴ (who had been persuaded by the Florentine exiles that he could make himself lord of Milan), crossed the Po on May 10th, 1467. The Florentine forces were commanded by Federigo, Duke of Urbino, who had also a great military reputation, but who was still more illustrious as a patron of Art and Letters.⁵ In the Florentine camp there was also Gian-Galeazzo Sforza, the young Duke of Milan, and Alfonso, the son of the King of Naples. After much manœuvring and many indecisive skirmishes, a battle was fought, near Imola, in which the Florentines had the advantage.⁶ Bartolommeo was

¹ Machiavelli, p. 286.

² There were other Florentine exiles in Venice who aided Soderini and Neroni in stirring up war against their native city. Chief among these was Giovanni Francesca Strozzi, whose promise to bear a part of the cost of an expedition against Florence weighed with Venice when she determined to undertake one. Francesco was the son of Palla, who, when exiled in 1434, had settled in Venice, where he amassed an enormous fortune as a banker (Litta).

³ Ammirato, v. 371.

⁴ Colleoni was the first *condottiere* of his day. The remains of his fine castle at Malpaga, near Bergamo (in which are frescoes by Romanino), are worth visiting.

⁵ The palace that he built for himself at Urbino is one of the finest specimens of domestic architecture in Italy. His court was conspicuous as an intellectual and artistic centre "when almost every city in Italy was a new Athens." He was probably, both as a man and as a ruler, more estimable than any other Italian Renaissance Despot. Those who desire detailed information about his interesting little duchy should consult Dennistoun's admirable *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino* (London, 1851; 3 vols.)

⁶ The accounts of this battle are ludicrously different. A Venetian historian writes that "those who were present declare that never in the memory of man was

recalled to Lombardy, not so much on account of his defeat, as because there were no signs of any anti-Medicean rising in Florence, which the Venetians had been led by the exiles to expect. After much negotiation peace was concluded on April 27th, 1468. The friends of those who had been banished had, however, not been idle during the war, but their plots were discovered, and a Capponi, a Strozzi, a Pitti, and a nephew of Niccolò Soderini were exiled. The war had not resulted in any accession of territory to Florence, but after its conclusion she purchased for 300,000 florins the town of Sarzana and the fortress of Sarzanello, which from their situation were strategically important: a purchase which proved eventful in the life of Lorenzo de' Medici, and still more so in that of his son Piero.

On February 7th, 1469, a grand tournament was held in the Piazza S. Croce, at the instance of Lorenzo, in compliance with a promise which he had made two years before to the beautiful Lucrezia Donati,¹ when, at a tournament held on the occasion of Braccio Martelli's wedding, she had presented him with a bunch of violets. These Italian tournaments were organised for the amusement of the spectators rather than as trials of strength between the combatants. This one gave rise to Luca Pulci's poem, *La Giostra di Lorenzo de' Medici*, in which it is elaborately described. It must have been a gorgeous spectacle. The dresses of all who took part in it—knights, pages, heralds, and musicians, were of the most costly materials. Giuliano de' Medici's costume is said to have cost 8,000 florins. Lorenzo wore over a velvet surcoat, a silk scarf embroidered with pearls, and his baret cap was adorned with rubies and diamonds. Steeds and armour had been presented to him for the occasion by the King of Naples and the Dukes of Milan and Ferrara. Lorenzo has himself left a brief notice of the festivity and its result. "In order to do as others," he wrote, "I appointed a tournament on the Piazza Croce, with great splendour and at great expense, so that it cost about 10,000 golden florins. Although I was young and of no great skill, the first prize was awarded to me, namely, a helmet inlaid with silver and surmounted with a figure of Mars."²

a greater battle fought or one in which more lives were lost," while Machiavelli says that though the fighting lasted half a day, "there was not one man killed and only a few horses hurt and a few prisoners taken." Ammirato (vol. v. p. 372) is probably nearer the mark in putting the killed at 300 men-at-arms and 400 horses.

¹ Some of Lorenzo's most beautiful sonnets were inspired by Lucrezia Donati, but her name never occurs in them.

² Reumont, i. 227.

This tournament seems to have been held to celebrate Lorenzo's betrothal to Clarice, a daughter of the great Roman house of Orsini, which had been arranged at the end of the previous year. Piero did not, in this instance, act with the same prudence as his father, or he would have selected a Florentine bride for his son. It is not unlikely that the tournament was intended as an antidote to the popular displeasure, which the announcement of the intended marriage had occasioned. The marriage took place in the following June (1469). Lorenzo curtly notes in his *Ricordi*: "I, Lorenzo, took to wife Donna Clarice, daughter of Signor Jacopo Orsini, or rather she was given to me in December, 1468."¹ While negotiations for the betrothal were in progress, Lorenzo's mother, Lucrezia, writing from Rome to her husband of Clarice, says: "The girl is above the middle height, of fair complexion and pleasant manners, and, if less beautiful than our own daughters, of great modesty; so that it will be easy to teach her manners. She is not blonde, for no one is here, and her thick hair has a reddish tinge. Her face is round in shape, but does not displease me. The neck is beautiful but rather thin, or more properly, delicately shaped: the bosom I could not see, as they cover it entirely here, but it seems to me well formed. She does not bear her head so proudly as our girls do, but inclining a little forwards, which I ascribe to the timidity that seems to predominate in her. Her hands are very long and delicate. On the whole the girl seems to be far above the ordinary type, but she is not to be compared to Maria, Lucrezia, and Bianca."² The marriage was not, on the whole, an unhappy one.

In 1469 Piero was daily becoming more infirm and quite as unable to control his followers as Cosimo, in his latter days, had been unable to restrain Luca Pitti. They tyrannised over their fellow-citizens, they committed all kinds of excesses, and altogether behaved "as if God and Fortune had given them the city for a prey."³ Though Piero was at the point of death, he made a gallant attempt to curb his lawless supporters. He called the most prominent offenders to his bedside, and having reviewed their misdoings he assured them that if they did not

¹ Roscoe infers indifference to Clarice from the expression "or rather she was given me," but this seems doubtful. Italian critics differ on the subject. See Roscoe's *Illustrations* (1822), p. 100.

² Reumont, i. 230. Maria, Lucrezia, and Bianca were Lorenzo's sisters.

³ Machiavelli, p. 290.

mend their ways he would make them repent of their victory. This was no idle threat, for when he found that his words were unheeded, he had a secret interview with Agnolo Acciaiuoli at Cafaggiolo, and, had he lived, there is but little doubt that some of the exiles would have been recalled in order to check the enormities of his own party.

Meanwhile (August, 1468) Florence took part in a short but decisive war, by which, in conjunction with the Duke of Urbino and the King of Naples, she prevented the Pope from asserting a claim to the lordship of Rimini, and succeeded in establishing Roberto Malatesta as its lord.¹

On December 3rd, 1469, Piero de' Medici died, and he was buried in the church of San Lorenzo, where his monument, designed by Verrocchio, may be seen. There was but little ceremony at his funeral, either because he was averse to display, or "in order not to increase the jealousy of his successors, who valued the possession rather than the appearance of power."² Ammirato's estimate of his character, though favourable, is hardly sufficiently appreciative. He speaks of him as a humane and kind-hearted man, who was not wanting in intelligence or experience, but who had been enfeebled not only in body but in mind by continued ill-health.³ Except during the last year of his life, when he was unable to restrain the lawlessness of his followers, there are but few signs of weakness of mind. When it is remembered that all his life he was crippled by gout, and was often unable to move hands or feet, his energy of character seems remarkable. It was said that at times his tongue was the only member that was of any use to him, and certainly with it, when on his death-bed, he gave his friends a sound rating.

¹ There were three claimants for Rimini. The Pope alleged that it had passed to the Church under a convention with Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, who had died without legitimate issue. Isotta da Rimini, Sigismondo's widow, claimed it for her son Sallustio (who had been born before wedlock), alleging that it had been bequeathed to him by his father. And Roberto Malatesta, another natural son of Sigismondo (by Vanetta di Galeotto), had made himself *de facto* governor of the State by fraud. Sigismondo was a typical child of the Renaissance, in whom culture and savagery were strangely blended. He was a patron of Art and Letters. He employed Leon Battista Alberti and Agostino di Duccio to build and decorate the church of San Francesco in honour of Isotta, who had been his mistress from his youth and who ultimately became his third wife. It was commonly reported that he murdered his first and second wives, but their respective fathers, who were both powerful dukes, do not seem to have credited the rumours. See *Un Condottiere au XV^e Siècle*, par C. Yriarte, Paris, 1882, and Dennistoun, i. 181-183.

² Ammirato, v. 379.

³ *Ibid.*, 378.

He displayed great energy and sagacity in several emergencies, notably in supporting the Sforza dynasty on the death of Francesco, in suppressing the Neroni-Soderini conspiracy, and in preventing his followers from attacking the *del Poggio* party in August, 1467. Nor had disease soured his temper, for he treated his vanquished opponents with unusual clemency. Like most of his family, he was an enlightened patron of Art and Learning, and many acknowledgments by authors of his kindness are to be found on the shelves of the Laurentian Library.¹ He maintained an unbroken friendship with Donato Acciaiuoli, who dedicated several of his learned works to him.² As a politician he shone perhaps more in foreign than in domestic affairs, and his judgment was held in esteem in the courts of Naples and Milan.³ His bust by Mino da Fiesole is in the Bargello.

He had married Lucrezia Tornabuoni, a member of one of the great mercantile families of Florence, who had espoused the side of the Medici.⁴ Although at this time there was no lack of distinguished women in Florence, it is said that she surpassed most of them in intellectual ability and domestic virtues. Lorenzo recognised that he owed much to his mother's influence.⁵

¹ The most remarkable of these is in Cristoforo Landino's *Elegies*.

² Roscoe, i. 89.

³ Louis XI. conferred on him the distinction of stamping the French lilies on one of the balls in the Medicean armorial bearings.

⁴ The Tornabuoni were descended from Simone Tornaquinci, one of the old Florentine nobles who had changed his name and arms in order to obtain civic rights.

⁵ There is a beautiful portrait of a Medici lady by Sandro Botticelli in the Berlin Museum, which is possibly of Lucrezia.

CHAPTER XVI

1434-1469

ART AND LITERATURE DURING THE SUPREMACY OF COSIMO AND PIERO DE' MEDICI

ARCHITECTS	SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	AUTHORS
Brunelleschi	Ghiberti	Fra Angelico	Poggio
Michelozzo	Donatello	Fra Filippo Lippi	Filelfo
Michelozzi	Michelozzo Michelozzi	Benozzo Gozzoli	Leonardo Aretino
Alberti	Desiderio da Settignano	Paolo Uccello	Cavalcanti
Filarete	Luca della Robbia	Andrea del Castagno	Leon Battista
	Bernardo Rossellino	Domenico Veneziano	Alberti
	Antonio Rossellino	Baldovinetti	Cennino Cennini
	Mino da Fiesole	The Pollaiuoli	D. Buoninsegni
		Pesellino	
		Pesello	
		Maso Finiguerra	
		ENGRAVERS	
		Maso Finiguerra	

ARCHITECTURE

IT has been said that Renaissance Architecture in Italy passed through three stages: a growth, which lasted from 1420 to 1500; a maturity, from 1500 to 1540; and a decline, from 1540 to 1580.¹ However true this may be of Italy generally, it is certainly not true of Florence, where this style of architecture culminated before the close of the fifteenth century. Almost all the finest Renaissance buildings, both ecclesiastical and secular, which she possesses²—the churches of S. Spirito and San Lorenzo, the Spedale degli Innocenti, and the Riccardi, Pitti, Rucellai, and Strozzi palaces—were either completed or

¹ Symonds, iii. 71.

² Her most famous buildings belong to the Gothic style, *e.g.* the Campanile, the Duomo, the Baptistery, the Palazzo Vecchio, Loggia de' Lanzi, and the churches of S. Maria Novella and S. Croce.

on the high road to completion before 1500; and none of the Florentine architects of the sixteenth century can be ranked with their predecessors, Brunelleschi, Alberti, Michelozzo, or Majano—men who have left the impress of their genius on the buildings of Florence almost as distinctly as Arnolfo. It was during the supremacy of Cosimo and Piero de' Medici that Florentine Renaissance architecture reached its high-water mark.

The palaces which have been enumerated are all in a style peculiar to Florence. The old fortress type, occasioned by necessity, which had prevailed for centuries among the dwellings of wealthy citizens, was not lost sight of, but it was modified by a study of classical buildings. The result was a style of much originality, which somehow had rather an Etruscan than a Roman character. Though wanting in elegance and variety, it is highly impressive from its massive grandeur and its air of almost insolent defiance. Not only from their splendour, but from their appropriateness they form a group "as worthy of admiration as any to be found in any city of modern Europe."¹

The ecclesiastical buildings of this period are also in a style that is at once eclectic and admirable. They are usually of the basilica type, treated with mediæval feeling, and the fusion of Roman and Gothic (two seemingly incompatible styles) is often surprisingly happy. This is well exemplified in the fine church of S. Spirito, which was commenced from BRUNELLESCHI'S design in 1430, and was now in process of construction. It is certainly one of the best specimens of ecclesiastical architecture in Italy; indeed the originality displayed by its interior makes it a real work of genius.²

The colossal Palazzo Pitti was begun in 1440, also from Brunelleschi's design.³ It is built of huge blocks of unhewn stone, and is one of the largest residential buildings in Italy.⁴ It was not finished till long after Brunelleschi's death, and it is probable that his plan was modified. He also built a magnificent villa for Luca Pitti about a mile outside the Porta S. Niccolò, which is now known as the Villa di Rusciano.

¹ Fergusson's *History of Modern Styles of Architecture* (1862), p. 89.

² The same may be said of some of Brunelleschi's earlier interiors, e.g. S. Lorenzo and the Capella de' Pazzi (Anderson's *Renaissance Architecture*, p. 5).

³ Reumont's *Tavole, sub anno*. Anderson gives 1435 as the date (*Renaissance Architecture*, p. 20).

⁴ "His eye must be delicate indeed who would desire to see the Pitti Palace polished" (Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*).

It may be remembered that the order for the erection of a cathedral "on a scale of as great magnificence as human effort or industry could invent" was given as long ago as 1294. The work, though set about at once, had progressed slowly. In 1366 a council of architects had decided on the shape of the choir and dome, but the dome was not completed for more than sixty years, and the building was not consecrated till 1436. It is one of the largest and most complete examples of Italian Gothic, and also one of the finest churches produced in the Middle Ages—"as far as mere grandeur of conception goes, perhaps the very best, though considerably marred in execution from defects of style which are too apparent in every part."¹ It is approximately contemporary with Cologne cathedral, which it very nearly equals in size, and in the conception of plan "there can be little doubt that the Florentine cathedral far surpasses its German rival. . . . The whole width is within ten feet of that of Cologne, and the height about the same; and yet in appearance, the height is about half, and the breadth less than half, owing to the better proportion of the parts and to the superior appropriateness in the details on the part of the German Cathedral."² Its exterior has also a defect, which is common to almost all Italian Gothic buildings. It is incrustated with a veneer of party-coloured slabs of marble, which produces, no doubt, a sumptuous effect, but which forms no part of the construction and must be regarded as false ornamentation. This is, at least, Ruskin's opinion, for while elaborately defending incrustation in general against the charge of insincerity, he says that in the Cathedral of Florence "the marble facing is so firmly and exquisitely set that the building, though in reality incrustated, assumes the attributes of solidity."³ Brunelleschi died in 1446 and was buried in the Cathedral at Florence.

MICHELOZZO MICHELOZZI (1391-?1472) earned a reputation as an architect second only to Brunelleschi.

The magnificent Palazzo Riccardi which he built for Cosimo de' Medici (1430-1440) is one of the finest specimens of Florentine domestic architecture. In 1437 he rebuilt the convent of San Marco and remodelled the church at Cosimo's expense. Indeed, most of the beautiful and important buildings erected by Cosimo were designed by Michelozzo. Among these were the Badia di Fiesole, at San Domenico (erected in 1462), and villas at Careggi

¹ Fergusson's *History of Architecture* (1874), ii. 331.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 332.

³ *Stones of Venice* (1886), vol. ii. p. 75.

and Cafaggiolo, and the beautifully situated Villa Mozzi (which was built for Cosimo's favourite son, Giovanni) on the slopes below Fiesole.¹ Between 1464 and 1469 he designed the chapel of the Annunciation in the church of the SS. Annunziata for Cosimo's son, Piero. He also built for himself the fine Villa Michelozzi, on Bellosguardo, which still belongs to the Michelozzi family. A figure in a black hood in Fra Angelico's Deposition in the *Accademia* is said to be Michelozzo's portrait.²

Almost equal to Brunelleschi as an architect, and superior to him in versatility, was LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI (c. 1405-1472).³ He was born in exile (probably at Venice) as he belonged to the great house who had been banished by the Albizzi faction, but he returned to Florence when Cosimo was recalled in 1434. He was one of those intellectual giants, almost peculiar to the Renaissance, whose many-sided genius fills us of these latter days with amazement. He was eminent as an architect, painter, musician, poet, prose-writer, philosopher, mathematician, and mechanician. He was untiring in the acquisition of all kinds of knowledge, and he was a brilliant conversationalist. Take him for all in all, he was probably one of the finest specimens of humanity which the world has ever seen. For in addition to his mental versatility he was endowed with physical strength and agility in an unusual degree. He could jump over a man standing upright, he could throw a coin on to the top of a high tower, and he could ride the most unmanageable horses.⁴ And besides all this he was a man of pure life, of lofty aims, and of a singularly gentle and sympathetic nature. All his paintings, which are said to have been chiefly portraits, have disappeared. He composed music, and was the best organist of his day. He advanced the sciences of Optics and Perspective, he is said to have invented the camera obscura, and he devised machinery for raising sunken ships.⁵

It is on his architectural works, however, that his fame chiefly rests. One of the most striking buildings in Florence, designed by him, is the Palazzo Rucellai (with its beautiful loggia), which was completed in 1460.⁶ It belongs to the same class as the

¹ The Villa Mozzi is now known as the Villa Spence.

² Michelozzo also worked at Venice and Milan. The capella Portinari in S. Eustorgio at the latter place was built by him.

³ His birth is variously assigned to 1401, 1402, 1404, and 1414.

⁴ Symonds, ii. 341.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 342.

⁶ His most important works out of Florence are the churches of S. Francesco at Rimini and S. Andrea at Mantua.

Ricardi and Strozzi palaces, and like them is impressive from its majestic solidity rather than its beauty. It is remarkable as being the first house of the period the front of which is ornamented with pilasters throughout.¹ The façade of S. Maria Novella (1470)—a good specimen of early Renaissance work—was designed by him,² and erected at the cost of Giovanni Rucellai. The chapel of the Holy Sepulchre (1467) in the desecrated church of San Pancrazio, the Tribune of the church of the Annunziata, and the palace in the Rucellai gardens (near the Via Oricellari) were also his works. It was in these gardens, which were laid out by Alberti, that the Platonic Academy held its meetings, and in this palace that Bianca Capella lived before her marriage with Duke Cosimo I. Alberti's works show a more close reproduction of Roman buildings than do those of Brunelleschi, and so, although he possessed much originality, he carried the Renaissance architecture one step nearer the lifeless Palladian manner.

ANTONIO FILARETE³ (c. 1414-c. 1480) was another eminent Florentine architect and sculptor who flourished at this time, but he did little, if any, work in his native city. He wrote a treatise on the building of the ideal city, which is a curious specimen of Renaissance fancy.⁴

SCULPTURE

The development of Renaissance Sculpture in Italy, as we have seen, preceded the development of Renaissance Painting. We shall have to wait for the days of Lorenzo de' Medici to see Painting culminate, but Sculpture reached its zenith in the lifetime of his grandfather Cosimo.⁵ During the period now under notice a galaxy of illustrious sculptors was flourishing. Of these Donatello and Ghiberti were the greatest, but not far behind them must be ranked Verrocchio, the Rossellini, Luca

¹ Anderson's *Renaissance Architecture*, p. 28.

² In connection with this work Ruskin speaks of Alberti as "the barbarian renaissance designer" ! (*Mornings in Florence*, p. 121).

³ His real name was Averlino or Averulino (Vasari, ii. 1, note). The dates of his birth and death are doubtful (Perkins, ii. 283). He designed the Ospedale Maggiore at Milan, and the Duomo at Bergamo, and he modelled and cast (c. 1431-1439) the bronze gates of S. Peter's at Rome.

⁴ Symonds, iii. 77, note.

⁵ It is true that Michelangelo flourished at a later date, and though his genius may be greater than that of those here mentioned, he stands almost alone, and signs of decadence in sculpture were visible enough in his works.

della Robbia, Desiderio da Settignano, Michelozzo Michelozzi, Mino da Fiesole, Benedetto da Majano and Civitale.¹

GHIBERTI's second Baptistery gate was completed in 1447 and set up in 1452. It now occupies the place of honour facing the Duomo. It comprises ten panels, representing subjects taken from the Old Testament that were selected by Leonardo Bruni. They are set in a framework of foliage, fruit, and birds, with statuettes of prophets, all finished with the utmost delicacy. "The Book of Genesis, in all the fulness of its incidents, in all the depth of its meaning, is bound within the leaf-borders of the gates of Ghiberti."² The rose window in S. Croce was designed by Ghiberti. He died in 1455. "Ghiberti should be rather called a goldsmith and a painter than a sculptor. . . . We must look upon his bas-reliefs as pictures, if we would estimate them fairly; and although it is in vain to deny that in this light they are from their very nature incomplete, their beauty is such as to excuse his illegitimate use of plastic materials, and to entitle him to be judged by an exceptional standard. He was a dangerous innovator, who opened the doors of license to be tolerated only in a man of such great genius, and who would have had a far more pernicious effect upon the young artists of his time had he not been counter-balanced by his great rival Donatello . . . whose juster perceptions of the true aims of sculpture saved it from being submerged by the use of means which belong exclusively to the sister art of painting."³

In 1434 DONATELLO, who had been working at Naples, Montepulciano, Siena, and Rome, returned to Florence, where he remained till 1444. It was then that he executed the pulpit outside the cathedral at Prato. No artist, except perhaps Botticelli, has ever expressed movement so well as it is to be seen in the charming troop of dancing children sculptured around this pulpit. It has more classical feeling than is to be found in Donatello's earlier works, owing no doubt to his recent visit to Rome. To this period many of his undated works may probably be assigned. The most important of these, which are now to be seen in Florence, are the alto-relievo (in *pietra serena*) of the

¹ All of these were Florentines except Civitale, who was a Lucchese. The Lombard Omodeo and the Venetians, Rizzo, Leopardi the Lombardi worked a little later, but all were born during Cosimo's life.

² Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* (1886), iii. 144.

³ Perkins, i. 136.

Annunciation in the Cavalcanti Chapel at S. Croce;¹ the sacristy doors, tomb of Giovanni de' Medici, marble sarcophagus, four evangelists, stucco medallions, terra-cotta frieze, etc., in the church of S. Lorenzo; marble statue of S. John the Baptist and David (the latter unfinished), in the Palazzo Martelli; reliefs of singing children on an organ balustrade intended for the Duomo (now in the Opera del Duomo); and a bronze statue of David in the Bargello. Between 1440 and 1457 he was working in Padua,² Venice, Faenza, and Siena.³

In the latter year he returned to Florence and remained there till his death, which occurred on December 13th, 1466. It is probable that the Judith and Holofernes group, which now stands in the Loggia de' Lanzi, belongs to this period as well as the two pulpits in the church of San Lorenzo, which he had not completed at the time of his death.

Donatello's later works—notably the Judith and Holofernes, the bronze David in the Bargello and the reliefs of dancing boys—display a decided classical feeling. But the bent of his mind was towards naturalism, and some of his works executed in mid-life were distinctly realistic. The Magdalen in the Florentine Baptistery and the S. John in the Bargello are examples of this style. "These works are neither ideal nor beautiful, and are in some respects even repulsive, but they are valuable and interesting as true and possible representations of the persons whom they portray, and show that Donatello did not consider that the object of Art was to give pleasure to the eye."⁴

The statue of S. John the Baptist in the Martelli Palace is in an intermediate style which partakes of the realistic and classical. Donatello had the rare faculty of judging the amount of finish necessary for a figure destined to be seen at a considerable distance, as is evidenced by the statue known as *Il Zuccone* and the bas-reliefs on the Prato pulpit and in the Opera del Duomo. A profile of S. John the Baptist, in bas-relief on *pietra serena*, in the Bargello, is noteworthy for the manner in which the hair is treated, for although the ancients were "unrivalled in their treatment of hair in the abstract, no sculptor, ancient or modern, ever surpassed Donatello in giving it all its qualities of growth and

¹ But those who believe in the first journey to Rome assign this relief to an earlier period (Perkins, i. 161).

² It was then that he executed the bronze equestrian statue of Gattamelata and the reliefs on the high altar in Sant' Antonio.

³ Marcel Reymond, pp. 126-136.

⁴ Perkins, i. 147.

waywardness."¹ Another peculiarity of Donatello was the extreme lowness in which some of his reliefs were worked, by which means he sometimes attains an indescribable beauty.²

The influence of Donatello on Art was enormous, and even if it was less than that of his great successor Michelangelo, which is doubtful, it was of a more healthy character. His genius acted on Sculpture through the Rossellini, Verrocchio, Mino da Fiesole, Luca della Robbia, and Desiderio da Settignano, and though he was no painter his influence may be traced in the works of Perugino, Leonardo da Vinci, and Fra Bartolommeo.³ "He may indeed be called the first and greatest of Christian Sculptors, as despite his great love and close study of the classical, all his works are Christian in subject and in feeling."⁴

MICHELOZZO MICHELOZZI, after he separated from Donatello in 1434, executed in terra-cotta the statue of a little S. John the Baptist, which is over the door of the Canonica facing the Baptistery, and a statuette of the same Saint in silver for an altar, which is now in the Opera del Duomo.⁵ There is also a Madonna and Child attributed to him in the same Museum.⁶ He died about 1472.

DESIDERIO DA SETTIGNANO (1428-1463) was a pupil of Donatello and one of the most eminent sculptors of his day. He died when only thirty-five years of age, but he had already made a great reputation. His most important work is the monument of Carlo Marsuppini in the church of S. Croce (completed in 1455), which Perkins⁷ considers one of the three finest tombs in Tuscany; and of his bust of Marietta Palla Strozzi the same critic writes, "it would be difficult to point out a bust, which more thoroughly combines those peculiar features of the best *quattrocento* work, high technical excellence, refinement of taste, delicacy of treatment, and purity of design."⁸ The marble altar in S. Lorenzo, over which is a charming little statue of the infant Christ, and a Magdalen in S. Trinità (finished by

¹ Perkins, i. 149. This is also remarkable in another bust of S. John at Faenza.

² This low relief is known as *stiacciato*. See the reliefs on the helmet of Goliath at the foot of the bronze statue of David in the Bargello. Another charming specimen of *stiacciato* work is a S. Cecilia in the possession of Lord Wemyss. It has always been attributed to Donatello, but its authenticity has recently been doubted (Hope Rea's *Donatello*, 1900, p. 70).

³ Lindsay, i. 171-175.

⁴ Perkins, i. 159.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 165.

⁶ Horner, i. 103.

⁷ Vol. i. p. 173.

⁸ Perkins, i. 175.

Benedetto da Majano) are the only other authentic works of Desiderio.¹

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA (1400-1482) was another of the brilliant group of sculptors whose genius adds lustre to the Florence of Cosimo de' Medici, and among whom he holds all but foremost rank. He had not the vigour, and perhaps not the originality, of Donatello or Ghiberti, but in a delicate sense of beauty he was unsurpassed by any of his contemporaries. His fame is most closely connected with the glazed terra-cotta ware that bears his name, but before he took to its manufacture he worked in both marble and bronze.² Between 1431 and 1440 he sculptured the ten exquisitely beautiful bas-reliefs of singing and dancing children for an organ-loft in the Cathedral.³ In 1437 he was commissioned to execute the five panels on the north side of the Campanile (facing the Cathedral), but from their style it seems probable that they are from designs that were left by Giotto. In the following year he commenced the bas-reliefs representing the Deliverance from Prison and Crucifixion of S. Peter which were never finished.⁴ The bronze doors of the Sagrestia Nuova in the Duomo were designed and cast by him between 1446 and 1467. They comprise ten panels which are "perfect models of plastic art, and are quite free from the over-elaboration and too pictorial style of Ghiberti."⁵ Luca's most important work in marble is the tomb of Benozzo Federighi, Bishop of Fiesole, that he executed in 1457-1458 for the church of S. Pancrazio,⁶ whence it was removed to the now desecrated church of S. Francesco da Paula, and from thence to its present position at the end of the south aisle in the church of S. Trinità. The recumbent effigy of the bishop, clad in his ecclesiastical robes, is placed on a sarcophagus within a recess, the architraves and side posts of which are decorated with

¹ For a list of works which may possibly be his, see Perkins, ii. 284. There are some bas-reliefs in the South Kensington Museum and one of a Madonna at Oxford which are attributed to him.

² Like most artists of his day he began life as a goldsmith. It is said by Balducci that he studied sculpture under Ghiberti, but this seems hardly credible (Perkins, i. 194).

³ These are now in the Opera del Duomo, in the same room as Donatello's bas-reliefs that were intended for another organ-loft in the Cathedral. Luca's will probably gain most admiration, but could the two series be seen in the positions for which they were designed this might be otherwise.

⁴ They are now in the Bargello.

⁵ Professor Middleton, *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 589. Perkins (vol. i. p. 194), however, considers them monotonous, and that they want the sharpness and clearness of line found in Ghiberti's work.

⁶ Richa, iii. 320.

enamelled tiles, which show that Luca had already begun to use pottery in combination with sculpture for purposes of ornamentation. "The perfect mean between truth to nature and decorative treatment has never been more thoroughly obtained than in these wonderful tile pictures" which are of special interest as being among the earliest specimens of Italian majolica.¹ This tomb is one of the most beautiful types of monument which has ever been devised, and it does not suffer by comparison with that of Cardinal Jacopo in San Miniato or of Medea Colleoni at Bergamo, nor does it rank far behind those of Guidarello Guidarelli at Ravenna or Ilaria Guinigi at Lucca.

While engaged on these works Luca was also experimenting in the production of the ware which is known as "Robbia ware." When his efforts were crowned with success he devoted the remainder of his life to its manufacture. It consists of baked clay, enamelled with an opaque stanniferous glaze, that will not crack and is unaffected by damp. He was not the discoverer of the process, as Vasari alleges, but it was perfected and its application extended by him.² The bas-reliefs over the doors of the two sacristies in the Cathedral at Florence, representing the Resurrection and Ascension, are among his earliest works of this kind, the former of which was made about 1443, and the latter about 1446.³ Another of his early terra-cotta works is a medallion, eleven feet in diameter, of the arms of King René of Anjou, which was executed for the Pazzi family about the year 1453 and at one time adorned their villa at Fiesole.⁴

Owing to the intrinsic beauty of the Robbia ware and to the facts that it is less costly than marble reliefs and less perishable than frescoes, a large demand for it set in,⁵ and Luca took into partnership with him his nephew Andrea and his great-nephew Giovanni. He was also aided in the production of the ware

¹ Middleton, *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 589.

² Enamelled pottery was made by the Egyptians, Assyrians, and Greeks, and in the thirteenth century by the Persians. Twenty years before Luca della Robbia's productions, Bicci di Lorenzo made, by a similar process, a relief of the Coronation of the Virgin, which is now over the door of S. Maria Nuova in Florence (Perkins, i. 195; *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 589).

³ Burlamacchi's *Luca Della Robbia* (1900), p. 96.

⁴ It is now in the South Kensington Museum. Passerini, Cavallucci, and Molinier assign it to 1453, but Reymond places it between 1460 and 1470. *Ibid.*, p. 79; Robinson's *Italian Sculpture of the Middle Ages* (1862), p. 54.

⁵ Vasari says that he received orders from France and Spain.

by Agostino di Duccio (who sculptured the beautiful *stiacciato* reliefs in S. Francesco at Rimini and on the façade of S. Bernardino at Perugia), but whether as a pupil or partner is not clear.¹ After Andrea's death the business was carried on by his sons. As the productions of the firm were for the most part unsigned it is often impossible to allocate them to particular members of the Della Robbia family, and many of those which are attributed to Luca were more probably by the hand of one of his successors.² Among the works in Florence, executed during this period, which may with certainty be ascribed to him are the medallions of the four Evangelists in the Pazzi Chapel at S. Croce (1450); medallions of four Virtues in the chapel of S. Jacopo at S. Miniato (1455);³ and a Madonna between two angels that was formerly over the door of S. Piero Buon Consiglio (otherwise S. Pierino) and is now in the Bargello (also about 1455); the Madonna⁴ and medallions outside Or San Michele; the monuments in the Church of the Impruneta and the Serristori Arms on the Guaratesi Palace. The only existing statues in Robbia ware are the two lovely kneeling angels, holding candlesticks, in the old sacristy in Florence Cathedral.⁵

It is generally supposed that the works of Luca can be distinguished from those of his successors by a more sparing use of colour.⁶ This is probably true of the pictorial portions of his reliefs, the figures in which are usually white on a blue ground, but his ornamental borders are as polychromatic as those of other members of his family.

BERNARDO ROSSELLINO (1409-1464) was one of a family of sculptors⁷ of whom he and his brother Antonio were the most

¹ Vasari, i. 341; *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 590. Duccio is sometimes called Gucci, and Perkins (vol. i. p. 200) identifies him with Agostino di Florentia. He was not a brother of Luca della Robbia, as Vasari supposed. Robinson attributes the Rimini reliefs to Luca, but this seems a mistake. See Yriarte's *Rimini* (1882), p. 238.

² Useful catalogues of extant works in Robbia ware with ascriptions, where possible, to their respective authors will be found in the Marchesa Burlamacchi's *Luca della Robbia*, pp. 107-121, and in Perkin's App. to cap. vii. vol. i.

³ The medallion of Temperance at S. Miniato is of exceptional beauty.

⁴ Its date has been assigned to 1463 and to 1455-1460.

⁵ Luca also executed a relief of a Madonna and Saints over the door of S. Domenico at Urbino, and the large Nativity (with three exquisite reliefs in the Gradino) in the Church of the Osservanza, near Siena, may also be his.

⁶ Perkins, i. 196. Professor Middleton questions this. *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 589.

⁷ There were five brothers of this name, viz. Bernardo, Domenico, Maso, Giovanni, and Antonio. They were the sons of Matteo di Domenico Gam-

eminent. He was employed as an architect by Popes Nicholas V. and Pius II., for whom he designed some princely buildings.¹ His most important sculptural work at Florence is the fine tomb of Leonardo Bruni in S. Croce, which he executed after 1444.² It is of the type characteristic of the period, *i.e.* a recumbent figure on a sarcophagus, on which are bas-reliefs of angels holding a scroll, eagles and a pall. In 1451 he executed the monument of the Beata Villana, a Florentine saint of the fourteenth century, in the church of S. Maria Novella.³ The dates of two of his best works, both of which are in the Bargello, are unknown. One of these is a bust of the young S. John "peculiarly delicate in treatment and full of the best qualities of *quattrocento* sculpture,"⁴ and the other is an excellent portrait bust of Battista Sforza, wife of Federigo, Duke of Urbino. He was *capo-maestro* of the Duomo from 1461 to 1464, and it is now thought that he died in the latter year.⁵

ANTONIO ROSSELLINO (1427-*c.* 1479), called "Antonio del Proconsolo" from the quarter of Florence in which he was born, was, as a sculptor, still more eminent than his brother Bernardo. He is said to have studied under Donatello, but his style has more affinity with that of Ghiberti. "He possessed grace, delicacy of treatment, dignity, and a rare feeling for beauty, and sweetness of expression, as we see in the noble monument of the Cardinal Portogallo at San Miniato near Florence,"⁶ which was completed in 1468. The recumbent effigy of the young cardinal lies on a sarcophagus in an arched recess, on the wall of which is a lovely medallion of the Madonna and Child in alto-relievo. The tomb is one of the most beautiful of its kind in Italy. It seems to shed around it "a calm and deep peace" only a little less intense than the Guidarello Guidarelli effigy at Ravenna.⁷ To the same period (*i.e.* before 1469) may be assigned the Madonna adoring the infant Saviour, encircled by lovely cherub-heads, and a bust of Matteo Palmieri (in the garden of whose villa Boccaccio intends us to suppose that the tales of the

barelli (*Ency. Brit.*, xx. 856), or perhaps Matteo di Domenico del Borra detto il Gambarelli (Perkins, ii. 286).

¹ For the former he designed the palaces at Orvieto and Spoleto and the baths at Viterbo, and for the latter the magnificent palace at Pienza.

² Perkins, i. 218. ³ *Ibid.*, i. 204; Richa, iii. 52. ⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 204.

⁵ *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 857. Perkins (vol. i. p. 218) gives 1470 as the date of his death.

⁶ Perkins, i. 205.

⁷ The tomb of the Duchess of Amalfi at Naples is a copy by Rossellino of the Portogallo tomb with variations.

Decameron were related),¹ and another relief in S. Croce of a Madonna and Child in a mandorla.

Mino di Giovanni (1431-1484),² called MINO DA FIESOLE, was another famous sculptor of this period. He had a refined sense of beauty and his works are remarkable for their delicacy of detail and devotional feeling. They are full of tenderness and grace, and he charms us with much the same charm as Luca della Robbia and Lorenzo di Credi, but with even less variety. Indeed there is a monotony of sweetness about his work which after a time almost palls. The tomb of Bishop Salutati in the Duomo at Fiesole, which he completed in 1462, is very fine, and it has more vigour than many of his works. The bust of the bishop "is certainly one of the most living and strongly characterised 'counterfeit presentments' of nature ever produced in marble. . . . It stands below a sarcophagus resting upon ornate consoles, upon an architrave supported by pilasters and adorned with arabesques. In design this tomb is perfectly novel, and so far as we know, has never been repeated despite its beauty and fitness."³ In the same cathedral, and immediately opposite the tomb, is a lovely altar-piece, also by Mino, of the Madonna and Child between SS. Lorenzo and Remigius. The beautiful altar-piece in S. Ambrogio is probably also one of Mino's early productions. Some of his most important works in Florence are the monument to Bernardo Giugni (who died in 1466), the monument of Count Ugo, and an altar-piece, all of which are in the Badia, and one or more of which may belong to this period.

PAINTING

The progress of Painting during this period continued to be directed by the action of the opposing energies described in the last chapter. Of these, Religion was still the most potent. Its influence was, however, being gradually undermined by Paganism. Realism was steadily gaining ground and on its onward march influencing different artists in different degrees, but continuing, on the whole, to raise Painting to a higher level. It just tinged the later works of Fra Angelico; it affected more deeply, but still wholly for good, those of Fra Filippo Lippi and Benozzo Gozzoli; while it took complete possession of the productions of

¹ Both of these works are in the Bargello.

² Perkins, *ii.* 286.

³ *Ibid.*, *i.* 208.

Paolo Uccello, Andrea del Castagno, the Pollaiuoli, and the other naturalists, converting them into danger-signals, to the significance of which the coming generation was unfortunately blind. In the works of this school we see the appearance of a new spirit, which ultimately led Painting to a different goal to that towards which it had hitherto been advancing, and it is now that the parting of the ways is first clearly brought into view. The realists had studied Nature to good purpose. They had increased their knowledge of perspective and anatomy and their power of correct delineation. But science and dexterity were becoming a snare to them. Formerly, painters had used their skill that they might the better express their ideas; they were now beginning to use it that they might show how much of it they possessed. The effect of this was seen not only in the treatment of the scene or incident depicted, but in its choice. Subjects, often unlovely, and sometimes repulsive, were chosen merely on account of their difficulty of representation; and when those were selected which did not naturally offer any such difficulty, they were twisted and tortured in portrayal until their ostensible *motif* was obscured, or crowded with anachronisms and irrelevant accessories, in order that they might be vehicles for the display of skill and knowledge.¹ This perversion of the proper function of Art became, in the next century, the rock on which Renaissance Painting was wrecked.

In the most important works of the period, however, not a trace of this new and noxious spirit is to be found. Between 1436 and 1444 FRA ANGELICO decorated the walls of the convent of S. Marco with frescoes, which have given to the building an interest for all lovers of sacred art second to none other in Italy, excepting perhaps the Lower Church at Assisi. From 1299 to 1435 it was inhabited by a branch of the Vallombrosans, but in the latter year, at the request of the Florentines and through the instrumentality of Cosimo de' Medici, it was transferred to the Dominicans.² The church and convent were then rebuilt at Cosimo's expense, and while the work was in progress Fra Angelico commenced his frescoes. That of the

¹ It is true that with some artists these apparently inappropriate backgrounds had a hidden and very noble meaning (Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1888), iii. 50).

² Richa, vii. 114-117. It is not a little remarkable that the Dominicans seem to have preferred the works of the Semi-Byzantines and the Franciscans those of the Giotteschi (Lindsay, ii. 224).

Crucifixion in the chapter-house is one of his most majestic works, and it displays a power with the possession of which those acquainted only with his easel pictures would hardly credit him.¹ "As long as painting exists" the figures below the cross in this fresco "will be admired; for the unequalled intensity of the expression, the contrasts of devotion, of grief, of convulsed feeling and calm inward meditation . . . have never been more finely combined for general effect than here."² On the walls of the cloister, the corridors, and many of the cells in the dormitory (where we feel the inspiration of the master most vividly),³ are more of his frescoes, in most of which we seem to have the expression of an "entirely spiritual mind, wholly versed in the spiritual world, and incapable of conceiving any wickedness or vileness whatever."⁴ Of these the Coronation of the Virgin is perhaps the most exquisite—"her sweetness and purity are beyond the sphere of criticism—they sink into the heart and dwell there in the dim but holy light of memory, in association with looks and thoughts too sacred for sunshine and too deep for tears."⁵ Hardly inferior to the Coronation are the Adoration of the Magi in an adjacent cell,⁶ and the Annunciation at the top of the stairs leading to the cells.

Of Fra Angelico's easel pictures, a Coronation of the Virgin in the Uffizi,⁷ and a Last Judgment in the *Accademia*, are among the finest. The room in which the latter is now hung contains between forty and fifty of his works. The excellence of his smaller works may be seen in a series of episodes in the life of Christ, painted on the panels of a plate-chest belonging to the Church of the Annunziata, which are now in this room.⁸

After 1447 Fra Angelico did no more work in Florence. In that year, aided by his pupil Benozzo Gozzoli, he painted frescoes of the prophets on the ceiling of one of the chapels in Orvieto Cathedral, and he then, at the bidding of Pope Nicholas V., went to Rome, and decorated the Pope's private chapel in the Vatican with scenes from the lives of S. Stephen

¹ His small easel pictures are generally superior to his large ones.

² *The Cicerone*, p. 55.

³ There are frescoes in more than thirty cells, but some of them were probably executed by Fra Angelico's brother, Fra Benedetto, or perhaps by other pupils.

⁴ Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1888), v. 289.

⁵ Lindsay, ii. 242.

⁶ This was the cell which Cosimo de' Medici reserved for his own use and in which he was wont to converse with Fra Angelico (Crowe and Cav., i. 582).

⁷ Berenson, p. 25.

⁸ Lindsay, ii. 231-233.

and S. Lawrence. He died in Rome in 1455, and was buried in the church of S. Maria sopra Minerva. He might have held the very highest post among Florentine ecclesiastics had he been of a less humble disposition. In 1446 Pope Eugenius IV.¹ offered him the Archbishopric of Florence, but he pleaded that his life was devoted to Art, and that he was altogether unfit to govern men, adding that he knew a member of his own order, Frate Antonio, who was well skilled in the management of others and far more worthy of the post than himself. The Pope adopted Fra Angelico's recommendation, and appointed Antonio to the vacant post. Fra Angelico's judgment of his old friend's character was not at fault. Fra Antonio administered his diocese with so much wisdom that he earned the title of "the good archbishop," and he led so saintly a life that he was subsequently canonised.²

We are in the habit of regarding Fra Angelico entirely as a representative of Mediævalism, but in some respects he was a typical painter of the period of transition in which he lived. His spirit was that of the Past, but his manner, though traditional and conventional, was significant of the Future. In the expression and individuality of his faces he was so much in advance of his predecessors that if Masaccio had not lived he would have been regarded as an innovator.³ There is, too, a distinct progress discernible in his works, for the frescoes in the chapel of Nicholas V. testify that he had made his own a part of the knowledge which his contemporaries had acquired,⁴ and he was the first Italian artist to paint as a background a landscape which can be identified.⁵ But increased knowledge never dimmed his spiritual vision or diminished his singleness of purpose.

FRA FILIPPO LIPPI (? 1412-1469), another artist friar, was one of the greatest of the painters of this period. He does not belong wholly to either of the rival schools, and he may be called a progressive idealist. He entered the Carmelite community, at the Carmine in Florence, when only eight years old. There is

¹ Dates show that Vasari is mistaken in saying that the offer was made by Nicholas V.

² Jameson's *Legends of the Monastic Orders* (1872), p. 397; Crowe and Cav., i. 590. S. Antonio is often represented in sacred pictures by Florentine artists.

³ Berenson, p. 26.

⁴ *The Cicerone*, p. 52. Like many of the greatest artists (e.g. Leonardo da Vinci, Gian Bellini, Titian, and Michael Angelo) he did his best work late in life.

⁵ The Lake Thrasymene from Cartona. Berenson, p. 26.

no doubt that in his youth he studied and profited by the frescoes in the Brancacci chapel, for those who had seen some work (no longer existing) which he did in the Carmine before he was twenty years old, affirmed that the spirit of Masaccio had entered into his body.¹ His style being formed under this influence partook largely of the new manner. He was remarkable for his mastery over the technical difficulties of his art, for his correctness as a draughtsman and for his excellence as a colourist.² Nevertheless much of the devotional feeling peculiar to the Semi-Byzantines lingered in his work, and the sweet seriousness in the faces of some of his Madonnas at times recalls those of Fra Angelico.

The best specimens of his early work in Florence³ are a Virgin adoring the Infant Christ and a Nativity, both of which were probably painted before 1439,⁴ and a Coronation of the Virgin, which was painted either in 1441 or 1447.⁵ These three works are in the *Accademia*. To a Madonna in the Uffizi, Filippo Lippi has imparted the mystic grace that was characteristic of his early style,⁶ and an Annunciation in San Lorenzo, before it was injured by restoration, must have been one of his finest works. In 1456 Filippo Lippi went to Prato, where he commenced decorating the choir of the Duomo with two fine series of frescoes, representing incidents in the lives of S. John the Baptist and of S. Stephen, which were finished about 1464.⁷ During his residence in Prato it is said that he fell in love with the beautiful Lucrezia Buti, whom he induced to leave the convent of S. Margherita, in which she was either a boarder or a novice, and by whom he became the father of Filippino Lippi. Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle discredit the story, mainly on the ground that it rests on the uncorroborated testimony of Vasari. Whether they have succeeded or not will be matter of

¹ Vasari, ii. 75.

² Crowe and Cav., ii. 320.

³ A fine altar-piece, painted for the church of S. Spirito in 1438, is now in the Louvre. There are four of his works in the National Gallery, two of which (an Annunciation and a S. John) were painted for Cosimo, and another (the Vision of S. Bernard) to fill a space over the door of the Palazzo Vecchio.

⁴ Crowe and Cav., ii. 322.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 326; La Fenestre, p. 181.

⁶ For a dissertation on this picture by Ruskin see *Fors Clavigera* (1896), pp. 200-202, 406-408.

⁷ The figure dressed in black, on the extreme left in the S. Stephen frescoes, is said to be a portrait of Filippo Lippi (Crowe and Cav., ii. 343. In the same fresco there is a portrait of Carlo, the natural son of Cosimo de' Medici (Vasari, ii. 82).

comparative indifference to those who agree with Ruskin. "The monk Lippi," he says, "whose work is the finest, out and out, that ever monk did; which I attribute, myself, to what is usually considered faultful in him,—his having run away with a pretty novice out of a convent."¹ He spent the last years of his life at Spoleto, where he died in 1469, it is said, from poison administered by the relations of Lucrezia Buti or of some other lady of whom he was enamoured.² He was assisted both at Prato and at Spoleto by Fra Diamante, who does not seem to have possessed much artistic talent.

BENOZZO GOZZOLI³ (1424-c. 1496), who like Filippo Lippi may be designated a progressive idealist, was the favourite pupil of Fra Angelico, whom he assisted till 1449. His early works⁴ are distinctly devotional in character, and testify to the school in which he was trained; but in his later works the influence of the naturalists is more apparent, though he never lost the religious feeling that he had imbibed from his master. In 1456 he came to Florence, and worked there till about 1464. Then it was that he decorated for Cosimo the walls of the little chapel in the Medici (now Riccardi) Palace with frescoes that are at once among the finest and most typical products of the Renaissance. They were painted by lamplight, as at the time of their execution there was no window in the chapel.⁵ Their subject is the procession of the Magi on their way to Bethlehem. The three kings are said to be portraits of the Patriarch Joseph and the Emperor Palæologus (who attended the Council of Florence in 1439), and Lorenzo the Magnificent, who must have been between ten and fifteen years old at this time, and who is represented riding on a richly caparisoned white steed. There is here that strange blending of the celestial with the mundane that was a peculiar characteristic of so much of the early Renaissance work. Troops of cavaliers, glittering with ornament, wend their way along the mountain-side, while "groups of angels, hand joined with hand and wing with wing, glide and float through the glades of the unentangled forest."⁶ Benozzo's drawing may not always be fault-

¹ *Fors Clavigera* (1896), i. 430.

² Vasari, ii. 85; *Ency. Brit.*, xiv. 684.

³ His real name was Benozzo di Lese di Sandro.

⁴ At Montefalco and Perugia.

⁵ The window was made in 1837, when it is said that a fresco of the Nativity by Filippo Lippi on the displaced wall was removed to the *Accademia* (Lafenestre, p. 328).

⁶ Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1888), ii. 210.

less,¹ and his landscape backgrounds are curiously conventional,² but as a master of decorative effect he has seldom been equalled.³

Pierfrancesco Fiorentino, who was painting about this time, may also have been a pupil of Fra Angelico. There is a Madonna by him in the Uffizi and another in S. Maria Nuova.⁴

Of the school of Naturalists, whose influence was strong at this time, both for good and evil, PAOLO UCCELLO is one of the most typical.⁵ He was born c. 1396, and died in 1469. His works are not attractive, but they are deserving of study. They are characterised by accuracy of drawing and knowledge of perspective. Over the latter science he expended so much time and thought that Donatello one day remarked to him, "Ah, Paolo, with this perspective of thine, thou art leaving the substance for the shadow."⁶ He was fond of introducing into his pictures all kinds of animals and birds, and it is said that it was from his partiality for painting the latter that he obtained his name. The only remaining works of his in Florence are a Battle-piece in the Uffizi, frescoes of the Deluge and the Sacrifice of Noah in the Chiostro Verde of S. Maria Novella, and an equestrian portrait of Sir John Hawkwood in the Duomo.⁷

ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO (1390-1451) belonged also to the school of naturalists. There is not a trace of mediæval sentiment to be found in his works, and it is incredible, as has been alleged, that he was a pupil of Fra Angelico.⁸ His works are characterised by vigour and sometimes by coarseness, and in expression he was one of the most vulgar of the realists.⁹

In 1456 he painted an equestrian portrait of the *condottiere* Nicolò da Tolentino, which is now over the left side of the central door of the Cathedral. Nine figures in fresco (some portraits and some allegorical) now in the Bargello, which were painted for the Villa Pandolfini at Legnaia, are his most pleasing

¹ Crowe and Cav., ii. 504.

² For the object of the religious painters in making their landscapes symmetrical see Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, ii. 209.

³ In 1464 Benozzo Gozzoli went to San Gimignano, and in 1469 to Pisa, where he laboured for sixteen years at the most important work of his life—Incidents from Old Testament History from Noah to Goliath. It was formerly supposed that he died in 1478, but it has been proved that he was alive at Florence in 1496 (Crowe and Cav., ii. 516).

⁴ Berenson, p. 33.

⁵ He is also called Uccelli. His name was Paolo Doni.

⁶ Vasari, i. 350.

⁷ There is an interesting picture of his (The Battle of S. Egidio) in our National Gallery.

⁸ Crowe and Cav., ii. 303; Berenson, p. 32.

⁹ Crowe and Cav., ii. 304.

productions; and the one of Farinata degli Uberti has power, dignity, and even beauty.¹ In his fresco of John the Baptist and S. Francis in S. Croce "the nude is drawn with a melancholy truth."² His power of portraying individuality is seen in his portrait of an unknown man in the Pitti.³ In the church of S. Apollonia he painted frescoes of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, and of the Crucifixion in S. Maria Nuova and in S. Maria degli Angeli (33 Via degli Alfani), which are still in existence. There are also three pictures of Saints in the *Accademia* which are attributed to him.⁴

DOMENICO VENEZIANO (1400-1461) was working at this time, and according to a story, credited by Vasari, but absolutely without foundation, he was murdered by Castagno, through jealousy of his superior ability as an artist.⁵ Nothing is known of the date or place of his birth, but his style was undoubtedly Florentine. Between 1439 and 1445 he was (with the aid of the Umbrian Piero della Francesca) painting frescoes in S. Maria Nuova which have perished. The only work in Florence, with which he is officially credited, is a Madonna and Saints in the Uffizi, in which the head of S. Lucy is almost worthy of Fra Angelico, while the other figures are in the manner of Castagno.⁶ He died four years after Castagno.

BALDOVINETTI (1427-1499) belonged also to the school of naturalists. He copied his models without attempting to idealise them, and he was sometimes led by "the charm of reproducing nature to represent what was coarse or ungainly."⁷ Like the Peselli, he experimented in the use of new vehicles, in consequence of which much of his work has perished. A Madonna and eight Saints in the Uffizi is, however, in fairly good preservation. Between 1460 and 1462 he painted a Nativity on a wall of the *cortile* in front of the Annunziata,⁸ and in 1466 a fresco of the Annunciation in the church of S. Miniato.⁹

¹ Crowe and Cav., 305; Berenson, p. 41. ² Crowe and Cav., ii. 309.

³ Berenson, p. 43.

⁴ They are not acknowledged as his by Mr. Berenson.

⁵ Vasari, ii. 98-103; Crowe and Cav., ii. 308.

⁶ Crowe and Cav., ii. 316. Mr. Berenson attributes to him a portrait in the Pitti and two frescoes in S. Croce (*Florentine Painters*, p. 140); and Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle (vol. ii. p. 317) speak of a fresco of a Madonna in the possession of Prince Pio.

⁷ Crowe and Cav., ii. 376.

⁸ La Fenestre, p. 225.

⁹ Mr. Berenson also attributes other works to him (*Florentine Painters*, p. 103).

The brothers POLLAIUOLI (Antonio and Piero), who were influenced by, if not the pupils of, Baldovinetti, commenced painting during this period. The picture of SS. Eustace, James, and Vincent in the Uffizi, which was painted in 1466, Vasari says was one of their joint productions, but Burckhardt thinks that it is by Piero alone.¹ As most of their work was done after 1469 they will be alluded to more at length later.

A painter of this period who attained some celebrity, but who is hardly entitled to first-class rank, was PESELLINO (1423-1457), as Francesco di Stefano was called. He worked with his grandfather Pesello from about 1442 to his death. A predella representing scenes from the life of S. Nicholas, now in the Casa Buonarroti, and another of scenes from the life of S. Benedict, in the Palazzo Alessandri at Florence, are their joint productions, and possibly also an Adoration of the Magi in the Uffizi.² They attempted to introduce oil as a medium in their tempera pictures, and they excelled in the representation of animals. Pesellino was distinctly an imitator of Fra Filippo Lippi, and the predella in the *Accademia* (No. 72) is probably his work alone. There is an Annunciation in the Uffizi which is attributed to either Pesellino or Baldovinetti.³

MASO FINIGUERRA (1426-1464) was an eminent goldsmith and niellist and an excellent draughtsman. He belonged to the school of naturalists, and he was associated in different ways with Baldovinetti and Pollaiuolo.⁴ In conjunction with the former he supplied Giuliano da Majano with designs for the *intarsiatura* in the sacristy of Florence Cathedral, and he was in partnership, in a goldsmith's business, with the latter. There is a niello *Pax* of the Crucifixion which is believed to be one which Finiguerra made for the Baptistery in 1452. He was one of Ghiberti's assistants in the execution of the Baptistery gates, and he aided in the production of a silver *dossale* for the Baptistery which is now in the Opera del Duomo. There is a series of ninety-nine drawings in the British Museum, forming a picture-chronicle of the world's history from the creation, which there are good reasons for believing to be his work.⁵ It was probably intended

¹ Vasari, ii. 224; La Fenestre, p. 19; Berenson, p. 135.

² Crowe and Cav., ii. 360. Morelli (*Italian Painters*, p. 254) attributes this work to Cosimo Rosselli. A figure with a black cap in the centre is said to be a portrait of Donato Acciaiuoli.

³ There is a Trinity by Pesellino in the National Gallery. ⁴ Colvin, p. 22.

⁵ See Mr. Colvin's interesting introduction to the reproduction of these drawings published by Quaritch in 1898.

to illustrate one of the many collections of Bible stories and pagan myths which were formed during the middle ages by abridging the works of Julius Africanus, Eusebius, Paulus Crosius, and others of a similar character. This series "is doubly interesting, first, as the fullest illustration which has come down to us of certain tendencies and characters of Florentine popular art: and next as the most elaborate and systematic attempt which exists at giving shape to early Renaissance ideas of general history. That the series must have occupied years of the artist's life seems certain; it is probable that it was originally planned with a view to reproduction by engraving, and not less probable that the whole scheme was cut off by death."¹

COPPER-PLATE ENGRAVING

It is not however as a goldsmith, niellist, or draughtsman that FINIGUERRA's name has come down to posterity, but as the inventor of the art of engraving on copper. His claim to this distinction rests on a statement by Vasari,² which, however, does not seem to be supported by any circumstantial evidence.³ According to Vasari's story the art was accidentally discovered by Finiguerra in 1460. It had long been the practice of goldsmiths, in order to judge how their niello works were progressing, to fill the incisions on the engraved plates with a mixture of soot and oil, and to strike off impressions on paper. It is said that it was the appearance of these impressions which suggested to Finiguerra the possibility of multiplying drawings by means of metal plates specially engraved for the purpose. Many of such proofs from unfinished niello plates, which were probably taken years before 1460, are in existence.⁴ After that year, Vasari tells us, copper-plate engraving was practised by Finiguerra, Baccio Baldini, Mantegna, Pollaiuolo, and Botticelli,⁵ but with one

¹ Colvin, p. 41.

² Vasari, iii. 485.

³ Germany has disputed with Florence her claim to the invention of copper-plate engraving. It was for long thought that the discovery in Paris by Abbate Zani of an impression from a Pax, made for the Baptistery at Florence, which was attributed to Finiguerra, had settled the question in favour of Florence (Ottley's *History of Engraving*, 1816, vol. i. pp. 306-312); but it seems that the Pax from which this print was struck was not by Finiguerra, but by Matteo Dei, and that printing from copper-plates was practised in Germany some twelve years before Finiguerra's supposed invention (Colvin, pp. 31, 33; and note by Milanese at pp. 347-349 of the Bargello Catalogue).

⁴ Colvin, p. 32.

⁵ Vasari, ii. 227; iii. 485, 486

exception no plates bearing any of their signatures are in existence. The exception is a large print of a Battle of Naked Men, signed by Antonio Pollaiuolo, which was probably executed between 1460 and 1470.¹ The first Florentine engraving, to which a date can be assigned, is one of a Pascal Table for finding Easter from the year 1461, decorated with representations of the Resurrection of Christ and of the four Evangelists.² About four years later seven prints of figures personifying the planets appeared with a Pascal Table embellished with symbols of the months as frontispiece.³ They are executed in the manner of the Finiguerra and Pollaiuolo School.⁴

WOOD ENGRAVING

Some of the undated single-sheet wood engravings of Florentine workmanship which are in existence, probably belong to this period.

LITERATURE

The dearth of originality in Italian literature alluded to in the last chapter was even more marked during the second than the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Nevertheless intellectual activity in the literary world was on the increase, but it was an activity of a scholastic, not of a creative order. The humanistic movement during the Petrarchan period was one of inspiration and discovery, during the days of Cosimo de' Medici it became one of acquisition and arrangement.⁵ The search for manuscripts of the classics was carried on with a fervour bordering on fanaticism. Many were discovered in religious houses, where they had been lying for centuries, perishing from damp and neglect, or hidden among ecclesiastical commentaries, and when found they were valued as precious gems.⁶ There was hardly an eminent scholar in Italy who was not engaged in translating the works of Greek authors into Latin; hardly an Italian prince who did not expend large sums of money on establishing a library.⁷

¹ Ottley's *History of Engraving* (1816), i. 446.

² A copy is in the British Museum.

³ From this table Easter could be found from 1465 to 1517 inclusive. The planets are described by Ottley, vol. i. pp. 362-367.

⁴ Colvin, p. 35.

⁵ Symonds, ii. 161.

⁶ *Ibid.*, i. 20.

⁷ One of the finest collections of books formed was that by Federigo, Duke of Urbino. Libraries had also been founded by the Visconti at Pavia, by the

Of this movement, as we have seen, Florence was the birth-place, and Florence continued to be the home. An enthusiasm for literature was generated there, which, as from a centre of light, radiated all over Italy.¹ It reached Rome through Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Bruni, and Gianozzo Manetti; Milan through Filelfo;² Venice through Francesco Barbaro. An example of literary patronage was set by Cosimo de' Medici, which was splendidly followed by King Alfonso of Naples, as well as by the rulers of minor Italian States. The Vatican Library was founded (1447-1455) by Pope Nicholas V., who, as Tommaso Parentucelli, had been one of Cosimo's librarians.³ Niccolò de' Niccoli,⁴ Carlo Marsuppini, and Ambrogio Traversari were also distinguished members of the literary coterie by whom Cosimo was surrounded, and whose influence extended beyond the walls of Florence. The names of all of these men "are now almost forgotten, though in their own day they received a respect which has rarely fallen to the lot of literary men."⁵ Their works repose undisturbed in libraries, and are remembered merely as literary curiosities. The fact is that although posterity is deeply indebted to them for their labours in the advancement of learning, it owes them little or nothing for their productions as authors. Their compositions comprise chiefly essays, orations, and controversies. In these they were more careful of the manner than the matter, aiming at an imitation of the style of Cicero or Livy, Seneca or Cæsar, and falling lamentably short of their aim.⁶ Their controversies, though sometimes arising from a personal cause, were often occasioned by some trifling difference of opinion, such as a preference for Plato to Aristotle, or Cicero to Quintilian.⁷ But however slight the origin of the contest, it often lasted for years, and was usually waged without regard to fact or decency. Each of the disputants endeavoured to surpass the other in virulence of invective and foulness of calumny.

Gonzaga at Mantua, and by King Alfonso at Naples. Petrarch's books formed the nucleus of St. Mark's library at Venice, which was largely augmented by those of Cardinal Bessarion in 1472. The formation of libraries at Florence and Rome is noticed in the text.

¹ Symonds, ii. 162.

² Filelfo was lecturing in Florence from 1429 to 1434.

³ The catalogue which he made of books in the convent of S. Marco was considered indispensable to all contemporary book collectors (Symonds, ii. 174). During the eight years of his papacy (1447-1455) he collected 5,000 MSS. at a cost of 40,000 scudi.

⁴ Niccolò bequeathed, in 1437, 800 MSS. to trustees for the benefit of the public. ⁵ Creighton, iii. 175. ⁶ Symonds, ii. 232. ⁷ *Ibid.*, 240, 242.

Two of the most formidable of these literary gladiators were Gian Francesco Poggio Bracciolini (better known as POGGIO FIORENTINO) and FRANCESCO FILELFO, and they are typical members of the humanist fraternity.¹ Both were men of wide erudition, but their knowledge was uncritical and it savoured of pedantry. The most celebrated of the feuds between writers of this day was one between these two men. While Cosimo was in prison before his exile, Filelfo had publicly urged the Signory to order his execution, and when in the year following an attempt on Filelfo's life was made by an assassin he, not unnaturally and possibly with reason, attributed it to the Medici. He thereupon assailed in satirical verse Cosimo's character with the vilest slanders, and ridiculed the prominent *litterati* who surrounded him. Poggio took up the cudgels in Cosimo's and his own defence and replied in prose. The controversy lasted for many years, and in it all "the resources of the Latin language were exhausted by the combatants in their endeavours to befoul each other's character, and the lowest depths of human nature were explored to find fresh accusations. . . . That such encounters should have been enjoyed and applauded by polite society is one of the strangest signs of the times; and that the duellists themselves should have imagined that they were treading in the steps of Cicero and Demosthenes is even more astounding."²

Leonardo Bruni (1369 - 1444), who is better known as LEONARDO ARETINO, wrote a Latin History of Florence (down to the year 1404) which was continued by Poggio, who left it unfinished at his death in 1459. These works were written in avowed imitation of the style of Livy, and, though inordinately esteemed on their appearance,³ they exemplify the weakness of that merely stylistic treatment of a subject which was the fashion of the day, and are without historical weight. The secretaryship to the Chancery of the Republic of Florence was held by Bruni from 1427 to 1444, by Carlo Marsuppini (who was also called Carlo Aretino) from 1444 to 1453, and by Poggio from 1453 to 1459.

Of far more value to us than the rhetorical and rancorous polemics, or the pedantic histories of Poggio, Filelfo, and Bruni, are the less pretentious works of Cavalcanti and Vespasiano.

¹ Symonds, ii. 237. Lorenzo Valla, Cardinal Bessarion, and Antonio Beccadelli should be classed with them, but their connection with Florence was slight. ² Symonds, ii. 239-240. ³ Symonds, *Ency. Brit.*, xix. 275.

GIOVANNI CAVALCANTI'S *History of Florence*, written in his native tongue, is an important record by an eye-witness of events that were taking place between 1420 and 1452, and tells us much that we should not otherwise have known of the supremacy and fall of the Albizzi and of the rise of the Medici.¹ It also manifests the fusion that was going on between the popular and humanistic styles.²

Vespasiano was at this time chiefly occupied in superintending the establishment of libraries. He lived to the close of the century and his works will be noticed in a subsequent chapter.

Cristoforo Landino (1424-1504) obtained the chair of Rhetoric and Poetry at Florence in 1457, and held it till his death. In 1460 he began to lecture on Petrarch, but his literary productions were the works of his later years.

DOMENICO BUONINSEgni finished his *History of Florence* in 1460. He died in 1465.³

Still more refreshing is it to turn to the works of LEON BATTISTA ALBERTI (c. 1405-1472), of whose eminence as an architect mention has already been made. When he was but twenty years old he wrote *Philodoxius*, a comedy in Latin verse, but he soon abandoned Latin, being convinced that a living nation could not use a dead language with dignity or self-respect.⁴ It is perhaps on this account rather than for the intrinsic merits of his works that he deserves honour. He was one of the first writers of pure Italian prose, but he could not free himself from humanistic influences, and his style is cumbrous and overcharged with Latinisms.⁵ His most important work in Italian was the *Trattato della Famiglia*,⁶ which was written between 1438 and 1447. It is "a model of practical wisdom, couched in the clear and practical spirit of a Goethe, and affording a pleasing insight into the Italian family life of the period, as yet unspoiled by luxury."⁷ His *Deiciarchia* is a dissertation on the duties of public men, in which he insists on the degrading influences of political life, and in his *Tranquillità dell'Animo* and *Teogenio* he eloquently enlarges on the charms and advantages of a con-

¹ *Istorie Fiorentine scritte da Giovanni Cavalcanti.*

² Symonds, iv. 176.

³ Reumont's *Tavole*, sub ann.

⁴ Symonds, iv. 186.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 342; iv. 183, 187.

⁶ This work contains a most interesting history of the great Alberti family. One section of it (the *Economico*) bears such a strong resemblance to Pandolfini's *Governo della Famiglia* that it is certain that one must have been derived from the other. For an inquiry as to which was the original see Symonds, iv. 192-203.

⁷ Garnett, p. 106.

templative life.¹ He was also a writer of novels in which the Art of Love and the relations of the sexes are discussed.² His poetry is rather that of a scholar than a born singer.³ He also wrote treatises on Sculpture, Painting, Optics, and Perspective, as well as an excellent historical monograph on Porcari's attempt upon the life of Pope Nicholas V.

Alberti was a true child of the Renaissance, but he had a soul above the petty rivalries and scholastic pedantries of the humanists, and in him we see the spirit of his age at its very best.⁴

MARSILIO FICINO (1433-1499) does not fall within this period as a literary character, but it was then that he entered on the career which led to his future fame. He was educated at the Florentine High School, where he greatly distinguished himself. While there, Cosimo de' Medici (whose insight into character was seldom at fault) recognised that Ficino was possessed of rare mental powers, and saw in him a fitting instrument for the furtherance of Hellenic studies in Florence. When he was eighteen years old, Cosimo took him into his house, where he was treated like one of the family, and caused him to receive an education which would specially fit him to translate and expound Plato, and to fill, as it were, the office of High Priest in the Platonic Academy. In 1459 he was attending lectures by John Argyropoulos on Greek. The training that he thus received made him just such a scholar as Cosimo desired. It was not, however, till long after the death of Cosimo that Ficino's translation of Plato appeared.

CENNINO CENNINI wrote his famous *Trattato della Pittura* in 1437.⁵ "From no single later art-period have we received any work of similar origin giving even approximately so comprehensive a picture of technical processes as this one does."⁶ It contains minute directions as to the preparation and use of colours and vehicles in fresco and tempera painting, and describes the methods of the Giotteschi. The claim that oil-painting was practised in Italy before it was practised in the Netherlands has been said to be proved by the *Trattato*, but this is not generally admitted.⁷

¹ Symonds, iv. 204, 205.

² The charming story of Ippolito and Leonora has been attributed to him, but on doubtful grounds (*Ibid.*, iv. 250, note).

³ Symonds, iv. 213.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iv., 218.

⁵ Vasari, vi. 83. The *Trattato* has been twice translated into English, once by Mrs. Merrifield in 1844 and once by Christina Herringham in 1899.

⁶ Berger, cited in the 1899 translation of the *Trattato*, p. ix.

⁷ Vasari, ii. 58.

CHAPTER XVII

1469-1478

THE FIRST YEARS OF LORENZO'S SUPREMACY—THE SACK OF
VOLTERRA—THE PAZZI CONSPIRACY

LORENZO was only twenty-one at his father's death, but he was old for his years, as he had, during Piero's frequent attacks of illness, been prematurely thrust into public life. In April, 1465, he had been sent to Pisa to receive Don Federigo (younger brother of Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, the heir to the crown of Naples), with whom he contracted a lasting friendship which proved of much service to him in later life. In the same year he went to Milan¹ to be present at the marriage of the Duke of Calabria and Ippolita Sforza,² and on his way thither he had broken his journey at Bologna and Ferrara where he was treated as if he had been a prince. In the following year he had been sent to Rome to negotiate a concession of some valuable alum mines at Tolfa, near Viterbo, from the pope to the Medici firm, and while there he was commissioned by his father to solicit the papal support for the Sforza dynasty. And only a few months before Piero's death he had again visited Milan to stand sponsor, in his father's name, to the infant heir of Galeazzo-Maria, the reigning Duke. Nor had Lorenzo's experience of public life been confined to foreign affairs. He and his brother Giuliano had represented their father at the meeting of the two Signories in August, 1467, when the *del Piano* and *del Poggio* parties had been required to lay down their arms; and the delicate work of secretly negotiating with Luca Pitti had been entrusted to him.

¹ Dietisalvi Neroni and not Lorenzo was the representative of the Republic on this occasion. The bridal party were startled on their way to Naples by the news that Giacompo Piccinino, who had recently married a half-sister of Ippolita, had been treacherously murdered by his father-in-law, King Ferdinand.

² A friendship sprung up between Lorenzo and Ippolita which also stood him in good stead in an hour of need.

Lorenzo must have acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his fellow-citizens on these occasions, or they would not have allowed him to step into that position of tacitly acknowledged supremacy, which his father and grandfather had occupied on sufferance, as if it had been an heritage. If Piero showed less sagacity than Cosimo in the matter of family alliances, he showed more in the choice of an adviser for his sons. The responsible and somewhat dangerous duty of giving counsel to Lorenzo and Giuliano he confided to his brother-in-law, Tommaso Soderini, whose influence was at this time only second to his own. Tommaso showed that he was well worthy of the trust.¹ Within a day or two of Piero's death he convened a large meeting of influential citizens in the convent of S. Antonio. It was held at midnight, and more than six hundred, "the flower of the city," attended.² Then "in a grave and most prudent speech" he urged the assembly to continue their allegiance to the Medici family, and to give to Lorenzo the authority that his father and grandfather had possessed.³ The proposal was supported by Gianozzo Pitti, Domenico Martelli, and other members of the anti-Medicean faction, and carried unanimously. The wishes of the meeting were, on the following day, conveyed to Lorenzo by a deputation. "The second day after his (Piero's) death," wrote Lorenzo in his *Ricordi*, "although I, Lorenzo, was very young, that is to say twenty-one years old, the principal men of the city and of the State came to our house to condole with us on our loss, and to encourage me to take on myself the care of the City and of the State, as my grandfather and father had done. I consented to do so, but unwillingly, as considering my age the burden and danger were great, in order to protect our friends and our property, for it fares ill in Florence with those who do not govern."⁴

¹ It may be remembered that Tommaso had aided the Medici in suppressing the conspiracy between his brother Niccolo, D. Neroni and A. Acciaiuoli.

² Reumont, i. 246.

³ Ammirato, v. 379. It seems from what Ammirato says that Tommaso might, had he chosen, have supplanted Lorenzo, but Gino Capponi (vol. ii. p. 354) questions this.

⁴ "Perchè a Firenze si può mal vivere senza lo Stato" (Lorenzo's *Ricordi*, cited by Roscoe in his *Life of Lorenzo*, vol. i. Appendix, p. 29). Gino Capponi (ii. 354) cites the passage thus: "Si può mal vivere ricco senza lo Stato." Roscoe disbelieves in the holding of the midnight meeting in S. Antonio on the ground that there was not time to have called it before the deputation waited on Lorenzo, but considering how speedily meetings in Florence were often convened, this objection does not seem valid. Machiavelli, Ammirato, and Guicciardini all mention the meeting. But Machiavelli's statement (*Istorie*

It is not unlikely that the unanimity of what may aptly be called Lorenzo's election to the post of *Capo della Repubblica* arose from a belief that the youth would be but a figure-head, and that the real governing power would be in the hands of those who professed themselves so ready to acknowledge his supremacy.¹ Guicciardini (p. 25), at any rate, attributes such a belief to Tommaso Soderini.² If this were so, it was not long before they found out that they had been mistaken.

Before, however, touching on the growth of Lorenzo's influence, some other matters must be noticed. Within a year of Piero's death considerable alarm was occasioned in Florence by the news that Prato was in the hands of a band of exiles. It had been surprised and taken by Bernabò Nardi at the head of a handful of desperadoes. Nardi had been banished in 1466, and the capture of Prato formed part of a plot, to which Dietisalvi Neroni was a party, for the overthrow of the Medici. Troops were immediately despatched from Florence, but before their arrival Nardi and his followers had been overpowered by the inhabitants of Prato, under the energetic leadership of the *podestà*, Cesare Petrucci.³ Bernabò and six of his companions were executed.⁴

In December of the same year Lorenzo was appointed *Sindaco* (the official whose duty it was to act in the name of the Republic) at a ceremony held to confer knighthood on an eminent citizen. This was a great honour, considering Lorenzo's youth and that he was not himself a knight.⁵

Three months after this ceremony Florence was enlivened by a visit from Galeazzo-Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan, and his wife Bona of Savoy. The Duke, who had a childish love of pageantry, evidently intended to impress the Florentines, and seldom has a more insolent display of wealth been witnessed. His

Florentine, pp. 292, 293), that Lorenzo attended it and greatly impressed the assembly by his speech and demeanour, seems improbable, for Lorenzo would hardly have passed it over in silence. ¹ Reumont, i. 247.

² Napier says (vol. iii. p. 378) that Lorenzo and Giuliano for a time devoted themselves to study and amusement, and left the direction of affairs to Soderini.

³ Petrucci was one of those able men of humble birth who had been promoted by the Medici. He again rendered signal service to Lorenzo at the Pazzi conspiracy.

⁴ From his confession it seems that Bernabò was chiefly actuated by a wish for notoriety.

⁵ In the previous year, when Jacopo de' Pazzi was knighted, Tommaso Soderini had been deputed to perform the ceremony.

cortège, which arrived in Florence on March 15th, 1471, comprised twelve litters covered with gold brocade, in which the ladies of his suite were borne; councillors, courtiers, chamberlains, and vassals, forty of whom had chains worth at least 100 golden florins each; fifty grooms in liveries of cloth of silver; numerous servants, even the kitchen boys, all clad in silk or velvet; fifty war-horses with saddles of gold brocade, gilded stirrups, and silk embroidered bridles, each led by a groom in a rich livery with the Sforza-Visconti arms on his doublet; and 500 couple of hounds with huntsmen, falcons, and falconers, together with trumpeters, players, and musicians. The guard was formed of 100 knights, each in the uniform of a captain, and 500 infantry. The entire suite needed 2,000 horses and 200 mules, and the cost of its equipment was calculated at 200,000 golden florins.¹ The retinue were lodged at the expense of the Signory, but the Duke and Duchess were entertained by Lorenzo at his palace in the Via Larga.² Here Galeazzo-Maria was filled with wonder and envy at magnificence of a kind to which he was unaccustomed. He had never before seen such a collection of paintings and sculptures by the first masters, vases, gems, intaglios, and rare and richly illuminated manuscripts, and he had the discernment and candour to acknowledge that in comparison with such treasures gold and silver were as dross.³

The Duke's visit took place in Lent, and the festivities in his honour gave great offence to the more sober-minded citizens, as this "was the first time it was ever seen in our city that in Lent, when all flesh was forbidden by the Church, it was eaten publicly without respect for the Church or God."⁴ The destruction of the fine church of Santo Spirito by fire was thought to be a judgment for this breach of ecclesiastical law. Three sacred dramas had been performed in different churches for the amusement of the guests. The last was that of the Descent of the Holy Ghost in the church of Santo Spirito, and it was the fire used for producing the desired effect which occasioned the conflagration.⁵ Machiavelli attributes an increase in the luxurious habits of the Florentine youth which took place about this time to the Duke of Milan's visit.

¹ Reumont, i. 263.

² Now the Palazzo Riccardi.

³ Ammirato, v. 382.

⁴ Machiavelli, p. 296.

⁵ The present church of Santo Spirito had been commenced on an adjacent site from a design of Brunelleschi's in 1433. Its completion was hastened by the destruction of the old church (Anderson's *Architecture of the Renaissance in Italy*, p. 18).

On July 26th, 1471, Paul II. died, and in the following month he was succeeded by Francesco della Rovere, who assumed the title of Sixtus IV. According to custom Florence sent an embassy to congratulate the new Pope on his elevation, and among her representatives was young Lorenzo. Sixtus received him, Lorenzo says in his *Ricordi*, "very honourably." He transferred the banking account of the Curia to the Medici firm, he granted them further concessions in connection with the rich alum mines at Tolfa, and he presented Lorenzo with marble busts of Augustus and Agrippa. Lorenzo failed, however, to procure a promise of a cardinal's hat for his brother Giuliano, though the Pope did not expressly refuse his request.¹ They parted apparently the best of friends, indeed, the intimacy which seemed to have arisen was such as to arouse the jealousy of the Duke of Milan.

Meanwhile Lorenzo had been taking energetic measures for establishing his authority. On the pretext that the war in support of Roberto Malatesta was not at an end, a forced loan of 300,000 florins was raised in order that the government might have funds in their hands for any emergency. Once again the *Accoppiatori* system was not working entirely to the satisfaction of the party in power. In spite of the changes that had been introduced on September 6th, 1466, a citizen who was not acceptable to Lorenzo and his friends now and then became a member of the Signory. This arose from the Council of One Hundred occasionally refusing to adopt in its entirety the list of candidates submitted to it by the *Accoppiatori*. Consequently in January, 1471, the powers of the One Hundred were curtailed. This measure was, however, but a temporary expedient, and six months later a *Balia*, consisting of the Signory, the *Accoppiatori*, and 240 added members, all Mediceans, was appointed, with power to control the composition of the Signory and the Council of One Hundred for five years. The most important duties of the *Consiglio del Popolo* and *Consiglio del Comune* were at the same time transferred to the One Hundred.²

¹ It has been suggested that Lorenzo was apprehensive that Giuliano, who was very popular, might become his rival, and that he desired to remove him from Florence. This is a mere conjecture, for so far as is known the brothers were always the best of friends. The desire to be represented in the Consistory is alone a sufficient motive for Lorenzo's request.

² Armstrong, p. 93. It is a mistake to suppose that the Councils of the People and the Commune were abolished. When the *Balia* was dissolved they resumed some of their functions (*Ibid.*).

Lorenzo also took steps of another character to maintain his authority. He had not forgotten how his father's supremacy had been threatened by a cabal of powerful friends, so he sent men of position, such as Tommaso Soderini, on foreign embassies, or he counteracted their influence when at home by promoting his dependants to important offices.¹ By measures such as these Lorenzo "began to gain a firm footing" in Florence.² Nor did he neglect other methods of agglomerating power. Following his grandfather's lead, he kept the conduct of foreign affairs exclusively in his own hands. Despatches from the rulers of other States were addressed—not to the Republic, but to him individually. "If we," wrote King Ferdinand of Naples to Lorenzo, "wish to obtain any kind of favour from the illustrious Republic we long for no other mediator and representative than your Magnificence." It was from the form of address, thus occasionally employed by courtesy, that the title arose by which posterity has thought proper, by reason of its appropriateness, to distinguish him.³ The Ferrarese ambassador at Florence expressed in one of his home despatches a truth which was fully realised by Lorenzo. "The reputation of Lorenzo," he wrote, "depends upon the consideration with which he is regarded by the powers of Italy and foreign monarchs. If he did not possess this he would not be so highly valued in Florence as is the case."⁴ He was regarded with consideration even by the King of France, for when he was but twenty-four years old, he was requested by Louis XI. to negotiate a marriage between the Dauphin and the eldest daughter of King Ferdinand.

In 1472 a revolt broke out at Volterra, and Lorenzo took a

¹ Among such were Bernardo Buongirolami and Cesare Petrucci, and somewhat later Agnolo Niccolini, Bernardo del Nero, and Pier Filippo Pandolfini.

² Guicciardini, p. 28. It was at about this time that the *Parte Guelfa* was dissolved. It had been the mainstay of the Albizzi faction, and its disappearance was a sign that the power of the aristocratic oligarchy, who had ever been foes of the Medici, was at an end. Napier, however, without citing his authority, says (vol. iv. p. 172, note) that the "Captains of Party Guelph" took part in the deposition of Gonfalonier Soderini in 1512. The ancient office of *Capitano del Popolo* was abolished about the same time. The office of *Podestà* was retained, and, though shorn of much of its dignity, it was eagerly sought after by foreign nobles.

³ Roscoe is in error in saying that Lorenzo alone was thus addressed. Roberto Malatesta was also styled "Il Magnifico." But it is a mistake to assume with Sismondi that all rulers of Italian States who had no accredited title were addressed as "Your Magnificence" (Dennistoun, i. 193, note).

⁴ Antonio Montecatino. Cited by Reumont, ii. 187.

prominent part in its suppression. His conduct on this occasion certainly reflects on his judgment, and perhaps on his clemency, but it has been so grossly distorted by his detractors that the event must be noticed at more length than it would otherwise deserve. A dispute had arisen between the Signory of Volterra and a trading company (among whom were some distinguished Florentines¹) concerning the legality of a concession to the latter body of some alum mines, at Val di Cecina, in the Maremma. The government of Volterra having taken forcible possession of the mines, put a stop to their working, whereupon the contractors appealed to the suzerain city of Florence. The Florentine Signory reinstated the contractors, but they referred the final settlement of the dispute to Lorenzo. This decision gave great dissatisfaction at Volterra, where, before Lorenzo had made his award, riots and bloodshed ensued, and the Florentine *podestà* narrowly escaped with his life. But when the tumult had subsided envoys were sent to Florence offering submission. Opinions differed as to what course should be taken. Tommaso Soderini, quoting the old Italian proverb, "Meglio un magro accordo che una grassa vittoria" (better a poor peace than a rich victory), counselled the acceptance of the submission. Lorenzo, on the other hand, urged the chastisement of the insubordinate city, and his advice was followed. He argued, with some plausibility, that the course he recommended would deter other dependencies from breaking into revolt; that this was not the first time that Volterra had rebelled;² and that if the insurgent city sought aid from Venice or Naples dangerous complications might arise. Possibly, however, he may have seized this opportunity to openly throw off Soderini's influence, and to show the Republic that the direction of its affairs was henceforth in his hands.

A force of 5,000 foot and 500 horse, under the Duke of Urbino, was accordingly sent to reduce Volterra.³ Had the town been properly garrisoned and provisioned its capture would have been no easy matter, as those who have seen it will readily understand. But it was defended by only 1,000 ill-fed and ill-paid mercenaries, who pillaged those whom they were paid to protect.

After a twenty-five days' siege the unfortunate citizens, tired of

¹ Gino Capponi, Antonio Giugni, and Bernardo Bonagiusti.

² An insurrection occurred there in 1429 through the unpopularity of the *calasto*.

³ According to Machiavelli the force numbered 10,000 foot and 2,000 horse. It included papal and Milanese contingents,

the lawlessness and depredations of the garrison, opened their gates and threw themselves upon the mercy of the Florentines. As the Duke of Urbino entered, on June 18th, an affray between some of his troops and the populace accidentally occurred, which led to the sack of the city.¹ The Duke did all in his power to restrain his soldiery; he rode among them protecting the women and children, and he hanged on the spot the alleged authors of the disturbance. But notwithstanding his exertions, the unhappy inhabitants were for some hours outraged and pillaged, as if the city had been taken after an assault.²

Lorenzo repaired at once to Volterra, and did all that lay in his power to mitigate the sufferings of the inhabitants. He has been severely blamed for the part that he played in this lamentable affair. It has been alleged that he had a pecuniary interest in the alum mines, but the list of contractors is extant, and it does not contain his name. It is true that the sack of Volterra was the outcome of the punitive measures that he advocated, but it formed no part of them. It was the result of an accident which he could not have foreseen, and neither he nor the Duke of Urbino can be fairly held responsible for it.

At the end of 1472 Lorenzo made a somewhat lengthy stay at Pisa, in order to reorganise the University, which, after having been held in high esteem for nearly two centuries, had latterly fallen into disrepute. The number of students at the Florentine University had also greatly diminished, but the Signory considered Pisa to be better suited for a centre of learning,³ and ordered an annual grant of 6,000 florins to be made to the Pisan Academy. This sum was largely supplemented by Lorenzo out of his private fortune. Some of the most eminent scholars of the day were appointed professors, at stipends that had never hitherto been exceeded.⁴ In this and in many other ways Lorenzo emulated his grandfather's munificent encouragement of Art and Learning,

¹ The affray is said to have arisen either from the insolence of a trooper or the fear on the part of the inhabitants of treachery, but its origin is uncertain (Dennistoun, i. 200; Reumont, i. 280).

² Guicciardini (p. 30) says that the news of the sack of Volterra occasioned much indignation at Florence, but this is hardly consistent with the ovation with which the Duke of Urbino was greeted on his return. He was presented with a silver helmet, and with the villa at Rusciano which Luca Pitti had built for himself.

³ Partly on account of the difficulty of procuring lodging accommodation in Florence.

⁴ Francesco Accolti and Baldo Bartolini, professors of law, received 1,440 and 1,050 florins respectively (Roscoe, i. 153, note).

but he had not his grandfather's aptitude for finance, and the profits of the Medici firm were beginning to fall off. Yet with a diminishing income his hospitality became more splendid, and every princely visitor who came to Florence was sumptuously entertained at his expense. It is not surprising that he soon became involved in pecuniary embarrassments. Much money too was expended by him on public amusements.

On January 28th, 1475, a great tournament was held, in which his brother Giuliano was the central figure. It has been rendered famous by Poliziano's poem, "*La Giostra di Giuliano de' Medici*." Giuliano's lady-love, "La Bella Simonetta," whose name repeatedly occurs in the poem, died fifteen months after the tournament.¹

In the following year an event occurred at Milan which in the near future is said to have indirectly affected the Medici family. On December 26th, 1476, Galeazzo-Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan (who in 1471 had hoped to astonish Florence by an extravagant display of his wealth), was stabbed to death by three Milanese nobles² as he was entering the church of Santo Stefano. Two of his assassins were killed on the spot by an infuriated mob, and the third was captured alive and torn to pieces by the public executioner. The people of Milan rallied round the Duke's widow and installed her as regent for her infant son, Gian-Galeazzo.

The deed had, however, consequences which extended far beyond the walls of Milan.³ Although it did not meet with the approval of those whom it was intended to benefit, it was applauded by a section of the educated public throughout Italy. This arose not so much from aspirations after freedom, or horror at the cruelties of a despot, as from admiration for a deed that was conceived in the spirit of ancient Rome. The Renaissance was fast colouring every branch of thought, and an enthusiasm for the antique, which had first found expression in Art and

¹ Simonetta is also the subject of some of Lorenzo's poetry. A beautiful picture of a young girl in the Pitti Palace by Botticelli has been supposed to be her portrait.

² Their names were Carlo Visconti, Girolamo Olgiati, and Giannandrea Lampugnani. The Duke had outraged the sister of Olgiati and deprived Lampugnani of his inheritance.

³ In addition to the effect about to be noticed, the government of the city was rendered unstable through the intrigues of the uncles of the infant Duke, and the influence of Milan being thus diminished, the balance of power in Italy was disturbed.

Literature, was now affecting morality.¹ It is true that two of the assassins had been grievously wronged by their victim, but all three had been taught by Cola Montano, a Bolognese lecturer on the Humanities, that tyrannicide was holy, and all believed that posterity would rank them with Virginius and Brutus. Their act was described by a Florentine writer as "a worthy, laudable, manly deed which should be imitated by all who live under a tyrant or anything similar,"² and his advice was speedily followed. Attempts to assassinate another of the Sforzas and the Duke of Ferrara were made in the same year, and it has been said (though probably without much reason) that the attempt on the life of Lorenzo de' Medici, which occurred two years later, and which is about to be described, was encouraged by the applause which had been lavished on Cola Montano's three disciples.

The cordial relations which had sprung up between Florence and Rome at the commencement of the pontificate of Sixtus IV. were not destined to last. They were disturbed ere long by the persistent and undisguised nepotism of the Pope, which was a fertile source of discord during the whole of his life.³ When a Franciscan friar, he had been more conspicuous as a preacher and theologian than as a man of affairs, but no sooner had he assumed the tiara than he concentrated his great abilities on secular politics, in the conduct of which he generally made every consideration subservient to the aggrandisement of his family. Two of his nephews, Pietro and Girolamo Riario, who were probably the sons of his sister Iolande,⁴ he treated with an almost doting fondness. On Pietro he conferred a cardinal's hat and the archbishopric of Florence, with other lucrative dignities, when he was but twenty-five years old.⁵ For Girolamo he purchased from the Duke of Milan the lordship of Imola

¹ "He who gives his own life can take a tyrant's" was becoming a popular saying.

² Rinuccini, cited by Reumont, i. 300.

³ It cannot be said that he was the first of the Popes whose policy was vitiated by nepotism, but he was the first who endeavoured to create hereditary principalities for his relations.

⁴ Muratori asserts that they were not the children of Iolande, but were the natural sons of the Pope. This, however, seems at least doubtful (Dennistoun, ii. 274).

⁵ Pietro's debauchery and foolish extravagance were a cause of scandal even in this profligate age. He died in January, 1474, of fever aggravated by excesses. Pandolfini says that he seems to have been born to waste money, and estimates that his expenditure during the two and a half years that he was Cardinal amounted to 270,000 golden scudi (Dennistoun, ii. 274).

for the sum of 40,000 ducats, at the very time that Florence was negotiating for its acquisition.¹ This not unnaturally gave offence to the Florentines, and the Medici firm threw obstacles in the Pope's way when he was endeavouring to raise the purchase money. It is doubtful whether he would have succeeded in raising it but for the intervention of the Pazzi (who also had a banking agency in Rome), to whom he thereupon transferred the banking account of the Curia which, only two years before, he had placed with the Medici. This account was very remunerative, and its removal still further estranged Lorenzo from Sixtus. Shortly afterwards the Pope accused Lorenzo of having given Niccolò Vitelli pecuniary aid while defending the town of Città di Castello against the papal troops. Lorenzo denied the accusation, and wrote: "Be assured, Holy Father, I reckon the favour of your Holiness among the greatest of my treasures, and I have no desire to lose it for the sake of Messer Niccolò or anyone else."²

Lorenzo's protestations, however, did not pacify the Pope, and the breach continued to widen. On the death of Pietro Riario, in 1474, Sixtus desired to appoint Francesco Salviati to the archbishopric of Florence, an appointment which, for some reason or other, was distasteful to the Florentines.³ The Pope yielded to their representations, and nominated Rinaldo Orsini, Lorenzo's brother-in-law, to the vacant see, but shortly afterwards, in spite of strenuous opposition on the part of Florence, he appointed Salviati Archbishop of Pisa. The Florentines retaliated by preventing Salviati from taking possession of his see. The Pope then induced the Duke of Urbino to quit the military service of Florence and appointed him Captain-General of the papal army.⁴ The growing enmity between Sixtus and Lorenzo was evidently threatening the tranquillity of Italy, and a league was formed between Florence, Milan, and Venice, but in order not to give offence to the Pope and his ally the King of Naples, the right to

¹ It was part of the bargain that the Duke should bestow on Girolamo the hand of his natural daughter, the redoubtable Caterina Sforza.

² Reumont, i. 291.

³ If Poliziano's description of Salviati is reliable, he was quite unfit for the post. "He was," says Poliziano, "as all the world knows, an ignorant man, a contemner of all law, human and divine, a man steeped in crime and in disgrace of every sort" (Trollope, iii. 332).

⁴ He also arranged a marriage between his nephew Giovanni della Rovere and a daughter of the Duke of Urbino, by which the duchy of Urbino ultimately passed to the Della Rovere family.

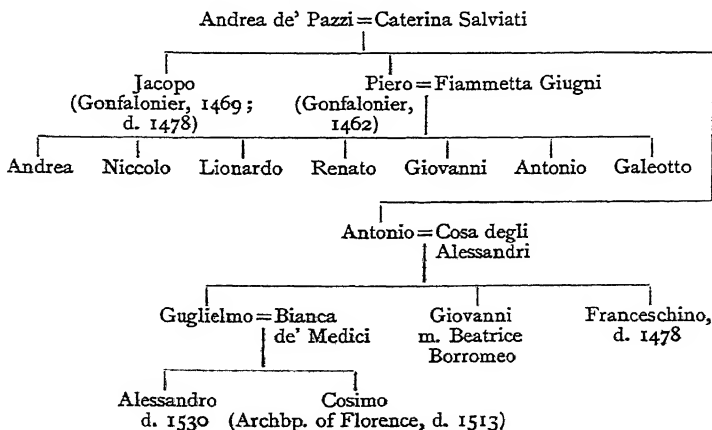
join the league was reserved to them if they desired to do so. Sixtus and Ferdinand, however, declined to avail themselves of the option, and the only effect of the league was to increase the good understanding that already existed between them. Nevertheless the outward relations between the five great powers continued for a time friendly.

In 1477 a further complication arose. Carlo Fortebraccio, the son of the famous *condottiere* Braccio Fortebraccio, attacked Perugia and devastated the Sienese territory. The Pope and the King of Naples, suspecting that the incursion had been prompted by Florence, sent troops to aid Siena, and a war, in which all the greater states of Italy would be involved, seemed imminent. This catastrophe was, however, averted for a time by the intervention of Lorenzo, who persuaded Fortebraccio to withdraw his troops. Nevertheless Lorenzo failed to conciliate either Sixtus or Ferdinand, whose enmity nearly effected his ruin in the following year.

A plot for his overthrow, which arose from many causes, was already brewing in Rome. The removal of the treasurership of the Holy See from the Medici to the Pazzi was particularly galling to Lorenzo, not so much on account of the financial loss which it occasioned him, as because it increased the wealth and importance of the only Florentine family from whose political rivalry he had anything to fear.

The Pazzi were one of the old noble families who had been disfranchised by the operation of the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* in 1293, and their civic rights had not been restored to them until the return of Cosimo from exile in 1434.

They were a very numerous family.



Andrea, who was the first of the family to regain a political status, left three sons—Jacopo, Piero, and Antonio—and at this time (1477) ten of his grandsons and numerous granddaughters were living.¹ No jealousy seems to have existed between Cosimo and the Pazzi, as two of Andrea's sons (Piero and Jacopo) had filled the office of gonfalonier, and his grandson Guglielmo had married Lorenzo de' Medici's sister Bianca. Nevertheless they must have been regarded in some sense as opponents, for in 1462 Alessandra Strozzi wrote to her son, "I must remind you that those who are on the side of the Medici have always done well, and those on the side of the Pazzi the contrary—so be careful."² Like the Medici, the Pazzi had amassed enormous wealth by means of banking agencies in many European towns, but unlike the Medici their family traditions were aristocratic. They are said to have been proud and overbearing and, as events proved, they were not loved by the people. Perhaps Lorenzo (who was quick to gauge popular sentiment) was aware of this, or perhaps the growing importance of the Pazzi had caused him uneasiness, for since the death of his father no member of the family had been allowed to hold office in the State. This exclusion from public life had bred in the Pazzi no little ill-will towards the Medici—an ill-will that grew into animosity when Giovanni, the son of Antonio de' Pazzi, was deprived, through Lorenzo's influence, of a large fortune which he expected to inherit in right of his wife.³ Francesco, or Franceschino as he was called by his familiars, another son of Antonio de' Pazzi, resented more bitterly than any other member of his family the slights and injuries to which they had been subjected. He left Florence in dudgeon and took up his abode in Rome, where he struck up an intimacy with Girolamo Riario, the Pope's nephew, and Francesco Salviati, the Archbishop designate of Pisa. Perhaps these three men were drawn together by their common hatred of Lorenzo. Girolamo owed Lorenzo a grudge for im-

¹ Piero had nineteen children. Antonio, besides the three sons specified, had six daughters.

² Armstrong, p. 122.

³ Giovanni de' Pazzi had married Beatrice, the only child of Giovanni Borromeo. On Giovanni Borromeo's death his nephew Carlo (the winner of the second prize at Lorenzo's tournament in 1468) set up and established a claim to his fortune. How this was done is not quite clear. Guicciardini (p. 36) says that it was by a retrospective law; Ammirato (vi. 6) that it was by a decision of the Law Courts. All agree, however, that it was the work of Lorenzo, and Machiavelli (p. 307) adds that it was done against the advice of Giuliano de' Medici.

peding his acquisition of Imola, and he knew full well that if at the Pope's death the Medici were still rulers of Florence, his tenure of the lordship of that city would be insecure. The ground of the Archbishop's enmity to Lorenzo has already been mentioned. From this intimacy sprung the plot to overthrow the Medici which is known as "the Pazzi Conspiracy." Whether it originated in the brain of Girolamo or Franceschino is not clear.¹ All we know for certain is that these two men, after discussing their grievances, agreed to attempt to subvert the government of Florence, and they came to the conclusion that this could only be effected by the murder of both Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici.²

The design was then communicated to Salviati, and after much consultation it was decided that Lorenzo should be enticed to Rome and there made away with, and that Giuliano should be assassinated during his absence. A pressing invitation from Girolamo, accompanied by profuse expressions of friendship, was accordingly sent to Lorenzo, but though the invitation was not refused, Lorenzo showed no sign of an intention to leave Florence. It was then resolved that the two brothers should be simultaneously murdered in Florence at some public ceremony, and that armed forces should be introduced immediately afterwards into the city to aid in crushing the supporters of the Medici, which it was believed would be no difficult task. It was however felt that the affair should be directed by a soldier, and accordingly the matter was broached to Giovan Battista Montesecco (a *condottiere* in the Pope's employ who was under obligations to Girolamo) by Franceschino and the Archbishop. From this point the development of the plot can be accurately traced, for Montesecco, after its failure (to which his scruples largely contributed), and when he was under sentence of death, wrote a complete account of it.³

¹ Guicciardini (whom Mr. Armstrong follows) thinks that it was Franceschino who conceived the idea. Reumont and Creighton hold that it originated with Girolamo. Roscoe attributes it to Sixtus IV. and his nephews.

² Machiavelli, p. 308.

³ The confession of Montesecco has an unmistakable ring of truth about it. He had moreover nothing to hope or fear for himself, as his doom was sealed; nor could concealment benefit or plain speaking injure his co-conspirators, as they had expiated their crime. There is also a full narrative of the plot written by Angelo Poliziano, who was an eye-witness of Giuliano's murder. This is said to be accurate, so far as Poliziano's knowledge went, but it is coloured by Medicean partisanship. It was first printed in the year of the conspiracy under the title *De Coniuratione Pactiana Commentarius*. It

The old soldier evidently gave his assistance most unwillingly. At first he refused to be a party to the plot on the ground that he was a servant of the Pope. He was subsequently interviewed on the matter by Count Girolamo, who explained that his lordship of Imola would be rendered more secure by a revolution in Florence, which was in truth (as far as he was concerned) the motive of the whole design, and that this could only be accomplished by "cutting to pieces Lorenzo and Giuliano." Montesecco urged that they were undertaking a very grave matter, and that he did not see how it could be carried out on account of Lorenzo's popularity. The Count replied, "These men (Franceschino and the Archbishop) tell me the contrary; they say that so far from being loved he is the object of much ill-will, and that when he and his brother are dead everybody will raise their hands in thanksgiving to heaven." He was also assured by Girolamo that the Pazzi and Salviati could carry half Florence with them. He then inquired "How does this matter please our Lord the Pope?" and was answered, "We can always make our Lord the Pope do as we please. Besides, his Holiness hates Lorenzo. He is more anxious for this than anybody else," and Montesecco was promised a personal interview with the Pope.

Shortly afterwards Montesecco was escorted into the presence of the Pope by Girolamo and the Archbishop. As our knowledge of the extent to which Sixtus IV. was implicated in the conspiracy much depends on what took place at this interview, the material parts of the conversation shall be given in Montesecco's own words. After the design for overthrowing the Medici had been explained, Montesecco's narrative continues as follows:—"I said, 'Holy Father, these things can hardly be carried out without the death of Lorenzo and Giuliano and perhaps of others.' His Holiness said to me, 'I will not on any account have the death of anyone, for it is not our office to consent to the death of anybody; and although Lorenzo is uncivil and treats us badly, yet I will not on any account have his death, but a change of government—Yes.' And the Count replied, 'We will do our utmost to prevent it from happening, if however it should happen, your Holiness will pardon those who do it.' The Pope

has often been reprinted. Montesecco's confession is printed at the end of Adimari's edition of Poliziano's Narrative and in Gino Capponi, vol. ii. pp. 547-558.

answered the Count and said, 'You are a fool.¹ I say to you that I will not have the death of anyone, but a revolution—Yes. And so I say to you, Giovanbaptista, that I much desire that the government of Florence should be changed and should be taken out of Lorenzo's hands, for he is uncivil and a bad man who does not respect us. If he were once removed from Florence we could do as we please with the Republic, and that would be a great advantage to us.' The Count and the Archbishop, who were present, said, 'Your Holiness speaks the truth, for when you have Florence in your power and can dispose of it as you will—as will be the case when it is in other hands—your Holiness can give laws to half Italy, and everyone will desire your friendship, so that you may be content with everything that is done for that end.' His Holiness said, 'I tell you that I will not have it. Go and do what you will, so that no death is occasioned.' And with that we got up from before his Holiness, coming to the conclusion that he was willing to favour and aid the use of armed men, or otherwise as was necessary for the business in hand. The Archbishop answered and said, 'Are you content that we steer this ship so that we steer it well?' And our Lord the Pope said, 'I am content.' Therefore we got up from before his feet and returned to the Count's chamber, where we fully discussed the matter, and arrived at the conclusion that it could not possibly succeed without their death—that is the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent and his brother. I said that it was a bad deed, and they replied that great deeds could not be otherwise accomplished."

It is difficult, after reading Montesecco's confession, to absolve Sixtus IV. from blood-guiltiness. It was not to be expected that a Pope should in words consent to a murder. He himself tells us that he felt what was due to his office. But it is clear that the impression left on the minds of the three men, who saw his demeanour and heard his remarks, was that their design would meet with his approval, even if it should occasion what he pro-

¹ The words used were "Tu si' una bestia." Much turns on the right translation of "bestia." Its signification here is much nearer to the French *bête* than to the English *beast*. It is a word that an Italian often applies to himself when he has done anything stupid. Napier and Creighton translate it "beast," Reumont "villain," and Armstrong "scoundrel." All of these are, I believe, misleading renderings. Trollope alone is correct. The sense of this expression is rather, "You are a fool to try and make me express what I desire only to imply," than "You are a beast (or scoundrel) to make such a wicked suggestion." Had Bishop Creighton appreciated this he would probably have spoken in less apologetic terms of the Pope's conduct than he has done.

fessed to condemn. This too was the opinion of the contemporary writer Stefano Infessura, who asserts that the murder of the Medici "was ordered by Pope Sixtus IV., together with Count Girolamo and others, to take away the dominion from Lorenzo de' Medici and give it to the Count Girolamo."¹

Though Montesecco appears to have had misgivings both as to the character and feasibility of the plot, he did not allow them, after he was satisfied as to the Pope's attitude, to interfere with his joining in it. He was therefore despatched to Florence in order that he might become acquainted with the city and observe the habits of the brothers Medici, and he was directed to seek an interview with Lorenzo, on pretence of consulting him about a claim by Girolamo to some lands near Faenza, which was the ostensible object of his visit. He was also instructed to endeavour to enlist the aid of Jacopo, the head of the Pazzi family, who it seems had been previously sounded and had disapproved the design, as the Archbishop had said of him that he was "colder than ice." On his arrival in Florence he was hospitably received by Lorenzo, who professed to take a kindly interest in Girolamo's affairs. Montesecco was favourably impressed with Lorenzo, and his dislike of the part which he was required to play seems to have increased. He also had more than one secret interview with Jacopo de' Pazzi, who, when he first heard the nature of his business, refused even to listen to him. Jacopo was an old man and childless. He was notorious as a gambler and blasphemer, but he must have been held in some estimation, as, after he had served as gonfalonier in 1469, he was knighted. His relations with Lorenzo up to this time seem to have been amicable. In 1474, when at Avignon, he had written to Lorenzo letters of thanks for some service rendered, and expressing hopes for the continuance of a good understanding between them.² He knew Florence better than Girolamo and the Archbishop, and realised the dangers of the undertaking. Nevertheless, after Montesecco had narrated what had passed at his interview with the Pope,³ and told him the wishes of the Pope and the King of Naples, a reluctant consent to join the conspiracy was wrung from him. Subsequently he displayed as much zeal as anyone concerned in it.

¹ Cited by Trollope, iii. 335.

² Reumont, i. 314.

³ It is in mentioning what he said to Jacopo that Montesecco gives the conversation with the Pope stated above.

Montesecco returned to Rome, and the final arrangements were made. Troops were placed in the neighbourhood of Perugia, Todi, Citta di Castello, and Imola, with orders to be in readiness to march on Florence. Six other persons were induced to aid in the execution of the design. These were Jacopo Salviati, the brother of the Archbishop; Bernardo Bandini, a ruined spend-thrift; Jacopo Bracciolini, whose father, the celebrated Poggio Fiorentino, owed much to the Medici; two priests, Antonio Maffei, who thought Lorenzo was responsible for the sack of his native city of Volterra, and Stefano da Bagnone, who had been secretary to Jacopo de' Pazzi; and Napoleone Franzesi, of San Gimignano, whose family had obtained an unenviable notoriety.

In April the Archbishop went to Florence, and shortly afterwards Raffaello Riario, a grand-nephew of the Pope, was ordered to leave Pisa, where he was studying, and visit Jacopo de' Pazzi at his villa at Montughi, just outside Florence. Raffaello, although only sixteen years of age, was already a cardinal, and it was hoped that the festivities, occasioned by his arrival at Florence, would afford an opportunity for the commission of the contemplated crime. He was probably entirely ignorant of the part he was playing in the drama. It was arranged that Lorenzo should be stabbed by Montesecco, and Giuliano by Franceschino de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini; that immediately afterwards the Archbishop, with an armed band of Perugians, should take forcible possession of the Palazzo della Signoria; and that Jacopo de' Pazzi should incite a popular rising. No sooner had the news of the young Cardinal's arrival reached the Medici brothers than, as was anticipated, they invited him to their villa at Fiesole,¹ and it was decided that during the entertainment to be given in his honour the blow should be struck. But Giuliano was indisposed and did not appear at the reception, and the execution of the plot was, in consequence, postponed to a banquet in the Medici palace, at which the Cardinal was to be present, after he had attended High Mass in the Duomo on Sunday, April 26th. Again the plans of the conspirators were disarranged by the news that, although Giuliano would be at Mass, he was not well enough to be at the banquet. They were unwilling to defer the execution of their project to a later day, as, owing to the number of persons who were privy to it, and the approach of foreign

¹ Now known as the Villa Mozzi.

troops, it was feared that secrecy could not be maintained, so it was hurriedly resolved that the deed should be done, while service was going on in the Duomo, at the moment of the elevation of the Host.¹ A further change of plan was, however, necessitated by this last alteration, for Montesecco refused to take the part assigned to him, saying that he would not add the sin of sacrilege to the crime of murder. But the two priests, Antonio Maffei and Stefano da Bagnone, had no such scruples, and accordingly Montesecco's part was allotted to them. It is probably owing to this circumstance that the plot miscarried. Yet one more obstacle had to be overcome. After Mass had begun it was noticed that Giuliano was absent. Franceschino and Bernardo at once hurried to the Via Larga, and succeeded in persuading Giuliano to accompany them to the Cathedral. It is said that they amused him with their conversation on the way, and that one of them playfully put an arm round his waist to ascertain if he was wearing a shirt of mail.²

When they returned the Cathedral was crowded, and they joined their friends who were standing at the entrance of the choir, which occupies a somewhat unusual position, being immediately beneath the dome, and which was then surrounded by a low wooden balustrade. At the appointed signal Lorenzo was standing at the south side of the entrance, and Giuliano at the north side, near the door which leads to the Via de' Servi. Franceschino and Bernardo did their work effectually. Bernardo plunged a short sword into Giuliano's heart, and Franceschino stabbed him some nineteen times with such blind fury that he seriously wounded himself in the thigh. The two priests were not so successful. Being unaccustomed to the use of arms, they only inflicted a slight gash on Lorenzo's neck. With presence of mind he wrapped his cloak round his left arm, and, warding off other blows, sprung over the balustrade into the choir, thence making his way in front of the high altar into the *Sagrestia nuova*.³ Bandini, having despatched Giuliano, and seeing Lorenzo escaping, rushed after him, killing on his way Francesco Nori (one of the Medici Bank managers), who tried to hinder him.⁴

¹ Ammirato, vi. 7. Historians differ as to the precise point in the service that was to be the signal for the double attack.

² Giuliano had injured his leg in an accident, and was unable even to wear a sword.

³ The lunette over the door of this sacristy contains Luca della Robbia's earliest attempt in the glazed terra-cotta ware that is known by his name.

⁴ In doing so it is said that he was paying off an old score.

Some of Lorenzo's friends, including Poliziano, followed him, and closed the heavy bronze doors upon Bandini and his other assailants. All this was the work of a minute, nothing but noise prevailed in the church, and only those near the choir were aware of what had happened. Those in the body of the church thought that the dome was falling in. The conspirators now fled in all directions, leaving the adherents of the Medici clamouring for admission to the sacristy. But those within did not know how matters stood, and it was not till a youth named Sigismondo della Stufa had clambered into the organ loft and saw only friends below, that the doors were opened. Lorenzo then learned that Giuliano was dead.¹ The boy-Cardinal, Raffaello, was all this time cowering in terror before the altar, and it was with difficulty that he was saved from the clutches of the mob.

Meanwhile, the Archbishop's enterprise had fared no better. As arranged, he had repaired to the Palazzo with some thirty Perugians and requested an interview, on urgent business, with Cesare Petrucci, the Gonfalonier. He was ushered into the Gonfalonier's private reception-room, leaving some of his armed followers below and some in an ante-room, with orders that on hearing any noise they were to seize the palace. He commenced explaining that he was come on a mission from the Pope, but his manner was confused and his speech so incoherent that Petrucci (whose previous experience at Prato had fitted him for prompt action) had his suspicions aroused, and rushing out of the room he shut the door, which closed with a secret spring and could not be opened from either side by strangers. He met Jacopo Bracciolini, and taking him by the hair of his head flung him to the ground and raised an alarm. The priors and the servants seized kitchen utensils or whatever else came to hand, and with the help of the palace guard succeeded in overpowering the Perugians, and prevented the followers of the Pazzi from effecting an entrance. The Archbishop, and such of his gang as had not been killed in the *mêlée*, were taken prisoners.

Outside the Palazzo, Jacopo de' Pazzi was riding at the head of a hundred armed men, shouting "*Libertà! Libertà!*" but the only response from the crowd was "*Palle Palle.*"² The city was soon in an uproar. The houses of the Pazzi were pillaged,

¹ This is the account given by Filippo Strozzi, who was an eye-witness.

² The "*Palle*" were the balls in the Medici coat-of-arms.

and Franceschino was dragged half naked and bleeding from his bed to the Palazzo. The news of what had occurred in the Cathedral had now reached the Gonfalonier who, without more ado, ordered the Archbishop to be hung in his ecclesiastical robes from one of the palace windows. Franceschino de' Pazzi, Jacopo Bracciolini, and the Archbishop's brother were dealt with in the same way. All of the Archbishop's followers who had been taken alive were either killed or flung from the windows. A mob collected outside the Medici palace and shouted for Lorenzo who, in spite of his wound, came out and addressed them. While thanking those who had protected him, he entreated his hearers to restrain their desire for vengeance, and to reserve the fulness of their anger for foreign foes. But the mob were not to be controlled by words. Everyone who was suspected of being connected with the plot was lynched. Bleeding heads and torn limbs were seen in almost every street, and it is estimated that at least eighty persons perished. Poor old Jacopo, who had been so unwilling to join the conspiracy, escaped to the village of Castagno, but was brought back to the city by some peasants, and executed. He was buried in the family chapel at the church of S. Croce, but such was the fury of the populace that his remains were disinterred, and after being treated with ignominy were flung into the Arno. The two priests, who had attempted Lorenzo's life, were two days later dragged from a hiding-place in the Badia, and after having been mutilated by the rabble were put to death.

All of the seven sons of Piero de' Pazzi suffered punishment. Renato, who was said to have been the best and wisest of the family, was executed for not having revealed the plot. He had refused to take part in it, and Lorenzo must be severely blamed for not having interfered to save his life. Renato's six brothers (none of whom except Niccolò had even any knowledge of the plot) were imprisoned or banished for life. Giovanni, the son of Antonio, was also imprisoned for life, and his brother Guglielmo was exiled. Guglielmo would probably have lost his life but for the entreaties of his wife, Bianca, who was Lorenzo's sister. Giovan Battista Montesecco was captured during flight, and after a lengthy trial was beheaded in the courtyard of the Bargello. While under sentence of death he wrote the confession already alluded to. By a decree published on May 23rd, the sentences of all who had been put to death without trial

were legalised, the Pazzi were deprived of their coat-of-arms, their property was confiscated, and those who married into their family were to be excluded from public service. Bernardo Bandini, the murderer of Giuliano, effected his escape to Constantinople, but the Sultan caused him to be arrested and sent back in chains to Florence, where he ended his days, as he deserved, on the gallows. His extradition much impressed the Florentines with the far-reaching nature of Lorenzo's influence. Napoleone Franzesi was the only one of the conspirators who made good his escape. This was accomplished with the aid of Piero Vespucci, who was in consequence sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

Giuliano was interred in the church of San Lorenzo with much ceremony and amid expressions of unfeigned grief. He had contented himself with a subordinate part in public affairs, but he had become a leader of society, and he was a great favourite with the gilded youth of Florence. A real affection subsisted between him and Lorenzo, and except on two important occasions—the chastisement of Volterra and the devolution of the Borromei inheritance—there seems to have been no difference of opinion between them. Had his advice been taken with respect to Beatrice dei Borromei's fortune, perhaps his life would not have been sacrificed. He was fond of music and poetry and of conversing with cultivated men. In many respects he resembled his brother in character, but he had probably a gentler nature and a kinder heart. He was never married but he left an infant illegitimate son,¹ whom Lorenzo adopted and who, in the next century, Florence and Rome were to know only too well as Clement VII.

It is impossible, after reading Montesecco's confession, to join with Sismondi in crediting the chief actors in the Pazzi conspiracy with noble motives. He sees in Sixtus IV. an elevation of sentiment and a desire for the independence of Italy, and he regards the Pazzi as patriots, striving to restore liberty to Florence, who would have been honoured in the days of the Greek and Roman Republics.² The plot was in fact but a move in the game of papal politics,³ and the Pope and his

¹ The child was perhaps posthumous. After he was made a cardinal, witnesses were forthcoming who swore that Giuliano had been married to the child's mother, Fioretta.

² Sismondi, vii. 123.

³ If Montesecco's narrative is not considered conclusive on this point, it may be mentioned that the project had been communicated to the King of Naples and the Duke of Urbino (Ammirato, vi. 6; Dennistoun, i. 231).

nephew attempted to overthrow the Medici rule, because it was a bar to enlarging the temporal authority of the one, and to the personal ambition of the other. The Pazzi were perhaps unconscious that they were being used as tools for the attainment of these ends, and had no doubt their own ideas as to the future government of Florence, but there is not a tittle of evidence that they were actuated by a love of liberty. Their conduct throughout seems to have been purely vindictive. It was the Medici, and not the Pazzi, who in the past had been on the side of free institutions. The supposition that the Florentines would have preferred the rule of the Pazzi to that of the Medici is ridiculous, or Jacopo's shouts of *Libertà, Libertà*, would not have been answered with the *Palle Palle* of the multitude. In truth there has seldom been a conspiracy which was instigated throughout by meaner motives.

CHAPTER XVIII

1478-1492

LORENZO'S VISIT TO NAPLES — THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
SETTANTA—FISCAL REFORMS—LORENZO'S FOREIGN POLICY—
SAVONAROLA—LORENZO'S DEATH AND CHARACTER

THE Pazzi conspiracy had not only been a signal failure, but it left Lorenzo in a far stronger position at home than he had previously occupied. It had made manifest the goodwill which the large majority of Florentines entertained for him, and the indignation which was felt at the murder of his brother and at foreign interference with Florentine affairs, caused those who had hitherto been but lukewarm supporters to rally round him with enthusiasm. It had, too, practically extinguished the only family from whom he had anything to fear. But its effect on his position abroad was different. Both Pope Sixtus and King Ferdinand were exasperated at the ill-success of their design, and the fury of Count Girolamo knew no bounds. He laid violent hands on Donato Acciaiuoli, the Florentine ambassador at Rome, and but for the attitude of the Venetian and Milanese embassies, Acciaiuoli would have been imprisoned in the castle of S. Angelo. Many Florentine merchants were arrested and had their goods confiscated, and the Pope summoned the Signory to decree Lorenzo's banishment. As no notice was taken of this insolent demand, it was followed by a bull excommunicating Lorenzo and all who had assisted him and threatening Florence with the deprivation of her archbishopric if she did not deliver up Lorenzo to the Pope within a month. In this document Lorenzo is designated as "a child of iniquity and nurseling of perdition," and among the sins laid to his charge mention is made of assistance rendered to Vitelli and Fortebraccio, of the refusal to allow Archbishop Salviati to take possession of his see, of the execution of Salviati, and of the imprisonment of Cardinal Riario. No allusion is made to the

murder of Giuliano, or to the part which Girolamo had played, but the execution of the archbishop is described as a murder arising from family feuds brought about by the tyranny of the Medici.

This is the pronouncement of the man who had reiterated almost *ad nauseam*, "but mind I will not on any account have the death of anyone." There is no record of his ever having censured those who, if his words meant anything, had deliberately disobeyed him. If the report of his interview with Montesecco leaves any doubt as to his guilt, it is removed by his subsequent conduct. All that can be said for him is that he was not coward enough to shield himself behind words which he intended to be meaningless.

After the receipt of the bull it was thought prudent to allow Cardinal Riario to leave Florence,¹ but the Pope's anathemas were treated with open defiance. An assembly of prelates and theologians of Tuscany met in the Cathedral of Florence, under the presidency of the Bishop of Arezzo, and not only decided that the interdict was invalid, but dared to excommunicate the Pope.²

It was evident, however, that this was not a quarrel which could be settled with spiritual weapons, and Florence prepared for war. Nor was she without allies, for the true nature of the so-called Pazzi conspiracy was fully realised, and had aroused indignation and anxiety outside Florence, especially where papal aggression was apprehended. How the matter was regarded in Venice is clear enough from a despatch from the government of that city. "The Holy Father must not flatter himself," she wrote to her ambassador at Florence, "he can conceal the purpose of his evil thoughts by asserting that he does not fight against Florence only, but against Lorenzo personally, for we all know perfectly well that this attack is not only on Lorenzo, who is entirely innocent of the false accusations heaped upon

¹ It has been said that the fright which he experienced was such that he never regained his former colour or spirits; nevertheless he lived for forty years afterwards in a turmoil of gaiety (Reumont, i. 342); and some ten years after the Pazzi conspiracy his house in Rome was little better than a gambling hell (Creighton, iv. 179).

² The audacity of this proceeding is so startling that it has been questioned whether it ever took place (Roscoe, i. 209; Reumont, i. 364); but that a synod was held at which the Pope's bull was discussed there is no doubt (Machiavelli, p. 318; Gino Capponi, ii. 384), and a printed copy of a *Contracomunica del clero Fiorentino fulminata contra il sommo Pontefice Sisto IV.* was seen by the antiquary Lami (Trollope, iii. 369).

him, but the present form of government in Florence which they wish to overthrow, and change according to their will, with the whole of Italy.”¹ Both Venice and Milan threatened the Pope with war if he did not withdraw the bull, and Ferrara and Mantua espoused the side of Florence. Nor did Lorenzo lack support beyond the Alps. Louis XI. of France sent no less a personage than Philip de Comines to threaten the Pope with an Œcumenical Council if he persisted in his present line of conduct. The King had long been labouring to produce a schism in the Church, and what had occurred at Florence seemed to afford a means of attaining his end.²

The Pope, with the active assistance of the King of Naples, commenced the war with energy. He sent a considerable force under the Duke of Calabria into Florentine territory from the south, and another under the Duke of Urbino from the east. The Florentine army, which comprised Milanese and Venetian contingents, was placed under the command of the Duke of Ferrara, and the services of Niccolò Orsini and other *condottieri* of note were secured. On July 11th, the Duke of Calabria encamped just below Montepulciano, and a herald was despatched to Florence with a brief from the Pope alleging that he was making war on Lorenzo and not on Florence, and requiring the Signory to expel Lorenzo from Florence on pain of being regarded as enemies of Religion and Christendom. Lorenzo at once called together about three hundred leading citizens, and assured them that if it was thought that the State could be served by his exile or death, he was willing to suffer either. The reply of the meeting was: “He must take courage, for it behoved him to live and die with the Republic.”³ At the same time a body-guard of twelve men was ordered to protect him. It was evidently thought that the Pope might resort to other means than open warfare for ridding himself of an enemy.

Hostilities soon commenced, and for months a kind of guerilla warfare was carried on, occasioning the destruction of crops and villages and ill-treatment of the peasantry. Florence had many difficulties to contend with. Siena had openly declared for the Pope, and Lucca was wavering. Genoa was being attacked by the King of Naples, and required assistance, and Pisa needed protection. But Louis XI. continued to urge the Pope to make peace with Florence, and his efforts were supported by special

¹ Reumont, i. 347.

² *Ibid.*, i. 352.

³ Ammirato, vi. 16.

embassies from England and Germany. Sixtus so far yielded to this pressure that in April, 1479, he suspended the ban laid on Florence, and consented to an armistice. He seems also to have abandoned his demand that Lorenzo should be given up. The conditions which he offered to Florence were, however, too humiliating for her acceptance; the negotiations for peace broke down on May 31st, and shortly afterwards hostilities were renewed.

The Florentine army was ill disciplined and ill led, and was very inferior in numbers to that of its opponents; nevertheless it obtained the first success, for a division under Roberto Malatesta, on June 27th, defeated the papal forces near Lake Thrasymene, on the same field where Hannibal had gained his memorable victory over the Romans. But on September 7th, owing to a disgraceful dispute between two commanders,¹ the main body of the Florentine army was utterly routed at Poggio Imperiale. Florence was now in imminent peril. The enemy plundered all the country around Cortona and Arezzo, sacked Poggibonsi and Vico, and captured the little town of Colle after a gallant resistance. Their further advance was only hindered by the approach of winter, and on November 26th a truce was proclaimed.

Lorenzo's affairs had reached a critical juncture. He fully realised that unless peace was concluded before the truce expired his ruin was inevitable. Both abroad and at home the horizon was becoming blacker. There were events taking place at Milan that not only immediately affected Florence, but were pregnant with ill for the whole peninsula. In an ill-starred hour for Bona of Savoy and her young son, she had become reconciled with her brother-in-law, Lodovico *Il Moro*,² who was rapidly absorbing into his own hands the government of Milan. It was no part of his policy to continue hostilities between Milan and Naples, and in spite of earnest solicitations from Lorenzo he made it quite

¹ The Duke of Ferrara and the Marquis of Mantua came to blows over some plunder. There is a quaint fresco of this battle on the walls of the Town Hall at Siena.

² He was the fourth son of Francesco Sforza. He is mentioned in some Paduan archives as *Lodovicus Maurus*, hence there is no doubt that his sobriquet *Il Moro* was derived from his second baptismal name and not, as has been suggested, either from his swarthy complexion (it was in fact fair) or from the mulberry tree (*moro*) which was one of his devices. His father used to call him *Moro* when he was a child, and the name clung to him. No doubt it was on this account that he adopted the Moor's head and the mulberry tree as badges in after life (Julia Cartwright's *Beatrice d'Este*, 1899, p. 14).

clear that Florence must expect no aid from Milan in the future, and advised Lorenzo to throw himself on the mercy of King Ferdinand. Lorenzo's popularity too was suffering. There were those in Florence who said that the Republic ought not to be brought to ruin for a single citizen.¹ Nor were these murmurs confined to the streets. Girolamo Morelli told Lorenzo, in the course of a debate in one of the council chambers, that the city was weary of war, and that he must bethink himself of peace.²

Lorenzo was not slow to grasp the situation, and he acted with the promptness that was one of his chief characteristics. Three days after the truce had been proclaimed he despatched Filippo Strozzi³ on a secret mission to King Ferdinand, to announce his willingness to accept terms; but before Filippo's arrival another messenger had reached Naples, who informed the King that Lorenzo intended to come to Naples and plead his cause in person. Before taking this decision Lorenzo had consulted a few friends, but it was not until after he had started on his journey that it was publicly announced.⁴ He left Florence on December 5th, having confided the conduct of affairs during his absence to Tommaso Soderini, and when at San Miniato al Tedesco, on December 7th, he wrote a letter to the Signory saying that he had not explained the cause of his departure because "in the dangerous circumstances in which our city is placed, it was more necessary to act than to deliberate. . . . I therefore mean, with your permission, to proceed directly to Naples, conceiving that as I am the person chiefly aimed at by our enemies, I may, by delivering myself into their hands, perhaps be the means of restoring peace to my fellow-citizens."⁵ His letter gave great satisfaction, and when at Pisa he received from the Signory an official despatch conferring on him plenary powers to negotiate with the King.

His mission was certainly not without danger. It may be that he had received, through Lodovico il Moro, a private assurance of personal safety from the King,⁶ but no reliance could be

¹ Ammirato, vi. 42.

² Machiavelli, p. 323.

³ This Filippo was a distant cousin of Palla Strozzi who had been banished by Cosimo, and it was he who commenced building the Strozzi Palace. He was a father of the Filippo (who married Lorenzo's granddaughter Clarice) of whom more will be heard.

⁴ Before his departure Lorenzo had called together some forty leading citizens and informed them of his intention.

⁵ Roscoe, i. 220.

⁶ Pitti (*Arch. Stor.*, 1842, vol. i. p. 25) says that he had received a similar assurance from the Pope. If so, Lorenzo knew it was not worth the paper it was written on.

placed on the word or clemency of the man who had enticed Piccinino to Naples and caused him to be secretly murdered. Lorenzo had also much to fear from the machinations of his enemies in Florence during his absence. A bold step was necessary to extricate him from present difficulties, and he did not hesitate to take it.

He arrived at Naples on December 18th, and he was honourably received by the King. Lorenzo, like his grandfather Cosimo, was one of those whose personality had an irresistible charm, and not many days had elapsed before Ferdinand had felt its influence. Lorenzo urged on the King that Lodovico's position was precarious, and that the policy of the papacy shifted with every new pope, and he persuaded him that the friendship of neither Milan nor the Church was so reliable as that of Florence. The King expressed his willingness to sign a treaty with Florence, but on various pretexts he contrived to postpone Lorenzo's departure. The fact was, that though he recognised the force of Lorenzo's reasoning, he did not want to offend the Pope, and delay might save him from doing so. Rumour had been busy in Naples about Lorenzo's unpopularity, and it was said that Florence would depose her uncrowned prince if his absence were prolonged. Nor were these reports altogether without foundation. The anti-Mediceans had not been idle, and the possibility of making Girolamo Morelli *Capo della Repubblica* in Lorenzo's stead had been actually discussed. But the plot—if it ever assumed the proportions of a plot—had been abandoned probably from want of support.

During his stay Lorenzo mixed in the gay life of Naples, and, as was his wont, he spent his money freely. He gave sumptuous banquets, he dowered poor girls, and he purchased the freedom of galley-slaves.¹ Nevertheless it is evident from his letters that his mind was full of misgivings. The friendship, however, of Federigo, the King's second son, and of Ippolita, Duchess of Calabria, were of real solace to him, and both used their influence in his behalf. The difficulty of settling the terms of the treaty was increased by various causes. Sarzana, which had been acquired by Florence in 1468, was captured while Lorenzo was in Naples by the brothers Fregoso, and this had probably been effected with the connivance of Ferdinand's son, the Duke of Calabria, although the armistice was subsisting. The lords

¹ Reumont, i. 411.

of Romagna, who had aided Florence during the war, were importuning Lorenzo to stipulate in any agreement he might make with the King for their protection from papal chastisement; and the Pope was urging Ferdinand to sign no treaty until Lorenzo had begged for forgiveness in person at Rome. But Ferdinand now realised that Lorenzo's position in Florence was secure, so in spite of the Pope's remonstrances, he completed the settlement of the treaty and allowed Lorenzo to leave Naples at the end of February.

Lorenzo reached Florence on March 7th, 1480, when he was received with enthusiasm. Young and old, rich and poor, flocked to see him, and the people embraced each other for joy.¹ The terms of the treaty, which was published on March 17th, were as follows. The contracting parties undertook to aid each other in the defence of their States. Poggibonsi, Colle, and other places which had been taken from Florence were ceded to Siena. The Pazzi, who were confined at Volterra, were to be released, and an annual sum of money was to be paid to the Duke of Calabria. No mention of the lords of Romagna was made, but the King had promised Lorenzo that he would protect them. Nor was there any provision for the restoration of Sarzana—an omission which caused some dissatisfaction in Florence.

On the Feast of the Annunciation peace was proclaimed, and a grand procession, headed by the picture of the Madonna from the church of the Impruneta, paraded the streets of Florence. Nevertheless it was by no means certain that another war was not at hand. Venice made no secret of her discontent at an alliance between Florence and Naples. The Pope refused to remove the interdict on Florence, and renewed his demand that Lorenzo should make personal submission to him at Rome. Moreover, the movements of the Duke of Calabria were occasioning serious uneasiness. He had taken up his abode at Siena, and it was evident that he was aiming at making himself lord of the city.

What would have been the fortunes of Lorenzo and of Florence it is hard to say, had not the attention of her enemies been unexpectedly distracted. "God, who in similar extremities has always taken particular care of Florence," says Machiavelli,

¹ Niccolò Valori, cited by Reumont, i. 412. The picture by Botticelli in the private apartments of the Pitti Palace is said to have been painted to commemorate Lorenzo's return. It is a figurative representation of the Triumph of Peace over War.

"caused an unhopcd-for circumstance to arise, which gave Pope and Venetians more important matters to think about than the affairs of Tuscany."¹ This was the capture of Otranto and the massacre of its inhabitants by the Turks.² The King of Naples recalled his son, who left Siena with reluctance, cursing the ill-fortune that frustrated his designs. The Pope was alarmed for the fate of Christendom, and was forced for a while to lay aside all thoughts of family aggrandisement or of the punishment of Lorenzo. He accordingly intimated to the Florentines, that if they sued for forgiveness, they should receive it. Florence at once sent twelve ambassadors to Rome, who were received under the portico of S. Peter's, and throwing themselves on the ground with every sign of humiliation, they asked pardon for the faults of their country. After speaking words "full of pride and anger,"³ the Pope gave them absolution, but he would not remove the interdict until they had agreed that Florence should maintain fifteen galleys so long as the Turks were in Italy.⁴

Although the treaty of March 17th had occasioned some discontent, it had on the whole improved Lorenzo's position. It was generally felt that he had risked his life for his country,⁵ and that having regard to the helpless condition in which Florence was placed, he had made as good terms as were possible. He lost no time in turning this access of popularity to account. Recent events had caused him to appreciate more thoroughly than ever the peculiarities of his position. He was but a simple citizen, allowed by his fellow-citizens to wield the powers of a prince, because they believed that it was for their advantage. But at any moment he might be deprived of every vestige of authority by a hostile vote. This had been made clear by the opposition which he had encountered during the conduct of the late war, and by the public criticism to which he had been subjected prior to and during his sojourn in Naples.

Under these circumstances a less sagacious man would probably have attempted to make himself the *de jure* as well as the *de facto* lord of Florence. But Lorenzo had studied Florentine

¹ Machiavelli, 326.

² Both Venice and Florence were suspected of having encouraged the Sultan to attack Apulia.

³ Machiavelli, 328. Volterrani professes to give the Pope's words, which hardly bear out Machiavelli's description of them.

⁴ This condition was not, however, insisted on.

⁵ This was denied by the anti-Medicean party.

history and Florentine character to some purpose. He knew that if he procured for himself any outward and visible sign of sovereignty, he would be imperilling the substance of his power for its shadow. So he resorted to no heroic measures, but contented himself with improving to the utmost, in different ways, the anomalous position in which circumstances had placed him. In doing this he displayed much wisdom and no little craft. His methods were, in the main, those that had been employed by Cosimo.

In the first place he set himself to fence round his unrecognised throne with constitutional forms, without greatly disturbing the foundation of popular acquiescence on which it rested.¹ On April 8th, scarcely a fortnight after peace had been proclaimed, at his instance a resolution was passed by the three Councils for the appointment of a *Balia*. Its constitution was entrusted to the Signory in conjunction with a Council of Thirty, whom the Signory were to nominate. It comprised 258 members. It represented all classes and districts, and precautions were taken to prevent the over-representation of any single *consorteria*.² It was the duty of this *Balia* (or *Consiglio Maggiore*, as it was called) to undertake the November scrutiny, or, in other words, to settle the lists of candidates for the public service, so as to exclude from office all opponents.³ These duties, however, did not commence for some months, and in the meantime the *Balia* directed its attention to other matters.⁴ Its most important act was the creation of a Council of seventy members, known as the *Settanta*.⁵ It was nominally constituted for five years, but it was intended to be, and was, in fact, permanent, and its members sat for life.⁶ This was a distinctly new departure,

¹ As Lorenzo has been severely, and sometimes unfairly, censured for the changes now introduced, they are described in some detail.

² It seems as if the Medici were exempted from this provision (Gino Capponi, ii. 404).

³ The names of selected candidates were placed in bags pertaining to the offices for which they were respectively eligible. From these bags the requisite number was periodically drawn. No name was placed in a bag that had not been approved by a majority of two to one, at a meeting at which not less than two-thirds of those entitled to vote were present.

⁴ They were directed to remedy abuses in the management of the Public Debt and in the system of Taxation, and to grant relief to districts that had suffered in the late war.

⁵ The *Provisioni* by which it was constituted are printed in *Archivio Storico*, vol. i. pp. 321-340.

⁶ Armstrong, p. 241. It was probably originally intended that the Thirty should be the permanent body, but so many of Lorenzo's friends desired seats on it that its numbers were enlarged to seventy.

in Florentine politics. Hitherto short—often inconveniently short—tenures of office by members of the governing councils had always been the rule. Whether the measure by which this new Council was created was adopted by the *Balìa* alone, or by that body in conjunction with other leading citizens, seems doubtful, but in either case it was the act of a large and representative assembly.¹ It consisted of the thirty citizens to whom the formation of the *Consiglio Maggiore* had been entrusted, and of forty additional members who were co-opted by the thirty. Three-fourths of the added forty were taken from the Greater and one-fourth from the Lesser Guilds; no one was eligible who had not attained forty years of age, and undue representation of a *consorteria* was prohibited.² Vacancies on the *Settanta* were filled by co-option. The gonfalonier was an *ex-officio* member, and any gonfalonier who had distinguished himself during his term of office might be elected as an additional member.³ The selection of the Signory, which had hitherto been made by the *Accoppiatori*, was henceforth entrusted to the *Settanta*, which also had a large share in the management of State affairs. The chief part of this business it transacted through two committees; one of eight members (called the *Otto di Pratica*),⁴ which controlled military and foreign affairs; and another of twelve members (called the *Procuratori*), which supervised financial and mercantile matters. The members of each committee held office for six months, and outgoing members were ineligible for re-election. The Signory was bound to lay before these two bodies matters relating to their respective departments. No proposal or petition by a private person could be addressed to the Seventy except through the Signory.

Though the supreme direction of affairs was, in fact, in the hands of the Seventy, it is important to observe that that body did not supersede the three existing Councils (*Consiglio del Popolo*, *Consiglio del Comune*, and *Cento*), which retained their legislative functions. No measure of importance could become

¹ The system of calling on influential citizens to aid public bodies when deliberating on important questions was not unusual. It was known as the *Pratica*.

² Not less than forty families could be represented on the *Settanta*.

³ Provided that his *consorteria* was not already fully represented.

⁴ All despatches from foreign States were required to be laid before this committee. It did not supersede the *Dieci della Guerra*, which only existed while a war was in progress. The *Otto di Balìa* was henceforth drawn exclusively from the Seventy.

law unless it was successively passed by a two-thirds majority, in a quorum of two-thirds, at meetings of each of these three Councils.

These changes in the government were effected without arousing popular excitement or opposition, but they did not of course meet with universal approval.¹ Alamanno Rinuccini, in his *Recordi*, says that on the day on which they became law the freedom of the people was dead and buried,² and Cambi wrote in the same strain.³ With one important exception, however, there was nothing that was new in them. It is true that they had been effected without an appeal to parliament, but that was a practice that had been introduced by Cosimo, nor will it be held that Lorenzo in following this precedent had committed a grave political crime, when it is remembered that for generations an appeal to parliament had been but an insult to the intelligence of the Florentines. The *Settanta*, in so far as it was an executive body, did but supplant the *Balia* with which Cosimo had habitually governed, and in so far as it was an electoral body, it was but the *Accoppiatori* under a new name.⁴

The exception which has been alluded to was the constitution of the *Settanta*, and that was a very substantial innovation, for life-membership of a council was foreign to every tradition of Florentine politics. By the establishment of this body the constitution of Florence was undoubtedly made less representative, and the influence of the Medici faction more permanent. To this extent it made Lorenzo's position more secure, but it did not, as has been often suggested, change the Republic of Florence into a virtual despotism. It placed the affairs of State, as even Lorenzo's detractors admit, in the hands of intelligent and cultivated men, who largely promoted the general prosperity. But the power in the hands of the *Settanta* and the three older Councils was both real and widespread. They represented, of necessity, all the districts of the city, the upper and lower classes, and a large number of great families, and the statutory require-

¹ Pitti says (*Archivio Storico*, 1842, vol. i. p. 25) that they were received with universal dissatisfaction, but had this been so it seems impossible that they could have been carried. Pitti was not a contemporary writer, and he is not corroborated by other historians.

² Reumont, ii. 190. Rinuccini (who was no friend of the Medici) was himself in the *Consiglio Maggiore* when the *Settanta* was created, a proof that the former body did not comprise only Lorenzo's adherents.

³ Cf. Perren's *History of Florence* (London, 1892), i. 354.

⁴ Villari's *Savonarola* (1888), p. 35.

ments as to majorities and quorums made it very difficult for one individual to control their proceedings.¹ Obviously Lorenzo's position still rested on the loyalty of his supporters. He had but given his friends facilities for maintaining his authority so long as they desired to do so. The elaborate machinery that he had contrived for his own protection might at any moment be worked for his overthrow. As will be seen, these Councils made short work with his son Piero in 1494. Nor can it, in justice to Lorenzo, be assumed, that in promoting the constitutional changes of 1480, he was actuated only by self-interest, for on the whole they made for the welfare of the State. During the remainder of his life Florence was more free from party strife and family feuds than she had ever been before; the direction of affairs was more constantly in the hands of men of experience; the sense of insecurity arising from an inefficient executive, and of instability arising from repeated changes of administration, was removed; and, as a consequence, there was less discontent with those in authority than had prevailed in past years. Art, Commerce, Industries, and Public Works were all progressing. No doubt Lorenzo's government will always be regarded with aversion by political theorists, but in the light of practical statesmanship it was the very best government that Florence had ever possessed.

The dissatisfaction with these reforms which was felt by Rinuccini, and the minority who thought with him, might have been more pronounced but for a plot to assassinate Lorenzo, the discovery of which, in June, 1480, occasioned much popular feeling in his favour. It was hatched in Rome, and though there is no positive evidence to incriminate Count Girolamo, it seems probable that it was instigated by him.² It originated with one Battista Frescobaldi, who considered that he had been insufficiently rewarded for giving up Giovanni Bandini (the Pazzi conspirator) to justice. He was joined by Amoretto Baldovinetti and two brothers Balducci. It was arranged that Lorenzo should be murdered in the church of the Carmine on Ascension Day.³ Frescobaldi, Baldovinetti, and one of the Balducci were arrested

¹ It is certain that substantial minorities often voted against the measures submitted to them, and it is likely that the two-thirds majority was not always obtained (Armstrong, p. 245).

² Pasolini's *Catherine Sforza* (London, 1898), p. 51; Napier, iii. 440.

³ Gino Capponi, ii. 407. Other historians say that the Cathedral had been chosen for the execution of the design.

and condemned to death. The sentence seems to have been *ultra vires*, so the Signoria and the Seventy passed a retrospective law making an attempt on Lorenzo's life High Treason—a remarkable enactment, seeing that he was only a citizen in the eye of the law. It shows that his supremacy was so real as almost to compel *ipso facto* some public recognition.

Besides these constitutional changes Lorenzo continued to pursue the traditional Medicean methods for maintaining his authority. He promoted into prominent positions men of no social standing, whose ability he had recognised, and he filled government offices, such as chancellorships and clerkships, with his dependants. This practice was displeasing to Lorenzo's influential supporters, but it strengthened his hands, and imported capacity into the executive. As has been seen, Cesare Petrucci did him yeoman service on two critical occasions.

Lorenzo's dealings with fiscal matters were of a more questionable character. Public credit was low, and owing to the heavy expenditure occasioned by the late war, the interest on the national debt was in arrear. He was himself hampered for want of money, and money was essential if he was to maintain his position. He knew as well as Cosimo how power could be increased by a lavish yet judicious expenditure. But he was not a financial genius, and the business affairs of the house of Medici had not prospered since Cosimo's death. Realising this he had prudently endeavoured to contract his banking operations, and had invested moneys withdrawn from business in land.¹ Nevertheless it is said that the failure of some of his foreign agencies (notably those at Bruges and Lyons) was only averted by aid from the public exchequer.

To what extent Lorenzo was guilty of the malversation of public moneys with which he has been charged it is impossible to prove, for ever since the days of Cosimo the finances of the Medici firm had been entangled with those of the Republic, and when, after the expulsion of his son Piero from Florence, the books from which his guilt or innocence could have been established were searched for, they were not forthcoming.² The charge mainly rests on the contemporary statements of Alamanno

¹ He purchased estates near Prato and in the Val di Pesa (Machiavelli, p. 344).

² It is generally assumed that they were destroyed to screen Lorenzo. It is more probable that they were destroyed to screen persons who were living at the time of the revolution.

Rinuccini and Giovanni Cambi, whose testimony against Lorenzo should always be received with caution.¹ Nevertheless it is certain that a belief prevailed at the time that Lorenzo had misapplied funds of the State, and it was held by his nephew Alessandro Pazzi, Machiavelli, and Guicciardini, all of whom wrote in the next century. If, indeed, Alessandro Pazzi, who wrote in 1522, was well informed, it was only the Pazzi conspiracy that saved him from bankruptcy. "When their credit fell," he writes, "they would have been driven from their position but for the events of 1478, which gained for the Medici new friends and confirmed the attachment of old ones, and altogether strengthened their power. The same events furnished Lorenzo with the means of using both his private means and the moneys of the State, which before he would not have dared to touch, to fulfil his own obligations, and re-establish his political influence on a permanent basis while rectifying his financial embarrassments."²

Whether or not Lorenzo improperly dipped into the Exchequer for private purposes, there can be no doubt that he did so for public objects, as his own fortune could not have withstood the drain of the enormous sums which he secretly disbursed in subsidising allies. These disbursements were essential to his foreign policy, and the desire for the power to make them was probably one of his motives in promoting the reforms now introduced, which gave him a more complete control over the State finances. Their ostensible object was the re-establishment of the public credit, and this the *Consiglio Maggiore* were empowered to take in hand between June and November, 1480. Much discontent had been caused by the forced loans, which being levied chiefly on personal property, hampered trade. To remedy this grievance a measure was passed by which the main burden of taxation was thrown on the land, and the taxes were levied on a graduated scale. It is always assumed that Lorenzo was responsible for this enactment, and it is certainly consistent with his policy, for, while it was highly popular with the poor, it depressed the rich.³

¹ Rinuccini had incurred Lorenzo's displeasure whilst engaged in an embassy in Rome, and had never again been employed in the public service. Cambi was a relative of the gonfalonier who had, through Lorenzo's interposition, received harsh treatment at the hands of the government. Hostility to Lorenzo is obvious in the writings of both.

² Cited by Reumont, ii. 191.

³ The chief tax was called the *decima scalata*, "the progressive tenth," as it was intended to realise one-tenth of the annual value of all land within the Florentine dominions. Rents under 50 florins were assessed at 7 per cent. of

It was, however, the mode of collecting rather than that of assessing the taxes that was iniquitous. In this Lorenzo followed the evil example of his grandfather, and "made of taxation a stick wherewith to flog" his enemies.¹ But Lorenzo never plied the stick as cruelly as Cosimo had done in a few individual cases, though he made quite as extended a use of it.

Another matter entrusted to the *Consiglio Maggiore* was the reform of the *Monte dei Doti* or Dower Fund. This *Monte* was in the nature of a Government Insurance Office, by means of which parents, on making small payments during their daughters' infancy, could provide them with substantial marriage portions. This institution undoubtedly needed reorganisation, but the changes now introduced into its administration opened the door to grave abuses. Five years later it was enacted that only one-fifth of the sum insured for should be paid to a girl on her marriage, and that the remainder should be retained by the State, bearing interest at seven per cent.² As traders in Florence could make a much higher rate of interest than this on their capital, the change was regarded as a great injustice. It occasioned a perceptible falling off in the number of marriages, and conducted to immorality.³ But quite apart from the ethical view of the proceeding it was a great error of judgment, and it diminished Lorenzo's popularity.

His position was, however, by this time too strong to be imperilled by one or two such mistakes. It had been considerably strengthened by his foreign policy, on which, as has been shown, his popularity largely depended. The finances of Florence were crippled, and it was quite as needful for her welfare as for his own that war should be averted. Hence after his return from Naples he laboured unceasingly for the preservation of peace in Italy. To attain this end he pursued a twofold policy. He strove to maintain a balance of power between the leading

their value, and the percentage was gradually increased to 22, which was levied on rents of over 400 florins. There was also a poll tax varying from 1½ to 4½ florins, and another tax called a *dispiacente sgravato*, which was a combination of a land tax and graduated income tax (Reumont, ii. 193; Armstrong, 259). A graduated scale of taxation had been in force in Cosimo's day.

¹ Armstrong, p. 251. Cosimo developed but did not introduce this pernicious system. Taxes had never been equitably collected in Florence except during the first years that succeeded the *catastro* of 1427.

² Varchi, p. 500. Armstrong (p. 268) gives one half as the amount paid down on marriage, but does not cite his authority.

³ Only one quarter of the sum insured for was paid in 1496 by the government which Savonarola had established.

Italian States, and to cultivate cordial relations between Florence and her more immediate neighbours. The first was but a continuance of a policy that had originated with Cosimo. The second he initiated himself, and he carried it out so effectively that before his death Florence was surrounded by a cordon of friendly States.¹ But the elements of discord which surrounded him were so numerous that an almost superhuman patience and sagacity were required to ensure success. To the intrigues of Ferdinand of Naples, of Lodovico il Moro, and of the Venetian Republic, and to the jealousies of the petty States which were always more or less active, there was now added the overweening ambition of Sixtus IV. and his turbulent nephew. From the endless complications produced by these causes Florence could not stand aloof, as her interests ramified all over Italy; yet her military strength was not sufficient to enable her to dictate. Nevertheless, before the end of his career Lorenzo had obtained a controlling influence in Italian politics, and his reputation for statesmanship had spread beyond the Alps.

The first disturbance after the peace of 1480 was occasioned by the Pope. No sooner was danger from the Turks at an end than he turned his attention to family matters. In 1481 he contrived to make Forlì a papal fief, and he installed Count Girolamo as its lord.² Girolamo, whose ambition far exceeded his ability, now aimed at adding the duchy of Ferrara to his lordships of Imola and Forlì, and he even entertained a hope that he might one day become king of Naples. Venice, who had herself designs on Ferrara, professed to be willing to aid Girolamo, merely intending to use him as a catspaw. She accordingly picked a quarrel with the Duke of Ferrara about some salt mines, and the Venetian and Papal forces entered his territory. The real objects of the attack were pretty well known, and as Florence, Milan, Naples, Bologna, and Mantua were averse alike to Papal or Venetian expansion, they determined to combine to resist it.

Nevertheless, Ferrara would probably have fallen in the following year but for a sudden change in the Pope's policy. Sixtus was becoming apprehensive of the growing power of Venice,

¹ He promoted a good understanding with Siena, Lucca, Bologna, Faenza, Ferrara, Rimini, Perugia, and Città di Castello.

² Florence was too exhausted by the late war to interfere.

he was threatened by a renewal of the Council of Basle,¹ and he was beset by troubles at home. Scarcity of food was occasioning such distress in Rome that riots were expected, and the chronic feud between the great houses of Orsini and Colonna was raging more furiously than ever. Accordingly, on December 12th, 1482, he concluded peace with the allies, and called upon the Venetians to desist from hostilities.² But Venice disregarded the mandate, pushed on the war with vigour, and for a time withstood almost the whole of Italy single-handed, but at length her army was defeated, and at the end of the year 1483 the allies could have dictated their own terms had they remained united. But early in 1484 dissensions arose between Lodovico il Moro and the Duke of Calabria, of which the Venetians took advantage, and induced Lodovico to make peace with them without the knowledge of his allies. The other parties to the league, though indignant at this act of treachery, concurred in the peace. All, except the Pope, were weary of the war, and they dreaded further complications, as Venice, in her extremity, had invited the Duke of Orleans to lay claim to Milan, and the King of France to support the claim of the Duke of Lorraine (Rene II.) to the crown of Naples. A treaty, ignominious enough for the victors, was signed at Bagnolo on August 7th, 1484. When the Pope heard that peace had been concluded, he was speechless with fury, and he died on the following day. The news may have hastened his end, as he was seriously ill at the time. The peace was distasteful to the Florentines, but they were not strong enough to refuse to acquiesce in it. They had gained something during the war, for taking advantage of a revolution in Siena (probably instigated by Lorenzo) they had, by promising to protect the city from the Duke of Calabria, obtained the restitution of Poggibonsi and other dependencies which had been ceded to Siena by the treaty of 1480.

One result of the Ferrarese war, unmarked at the time, was the prelude to important events. This was the arrival in Florence of Girolamo Savonarola.³ Driven from his native city of Ferrara

¹ The threat was only by an insubordinate archbishop, but the Pope suspected that it was countenanced by the Emperor of Germany, and was alarmed (Creighton, iv. 106-109).

² The condition of Rome may be gathered from the fact that Girolamo took up his quarters in the church of S. John Lateran, and played cards with his friends in the sacristy (Creighton, iv. 103).

³ The date of his arrival in Florence is not quite certain. Marchese thinks it was not before May, 1482, but Villari puts it earlier. See Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 71 and 72, note (2).

by its disturbed condition, the young Dominican friar made his way across the Apennines, and took up his abode in the convent of San Marco, the walls of which were already glowing with Fra Angelico's divinely-inspired handiwork, and to which a new fame was to be added by association with Savonarola's name.

Sixtus IV. was succeeded by Giovanni Battista Cibò, a Genoese, who assumed the title of Innocent VIII., and was crowned on September 12th. By the death of the late Pope Lorenzo was relieved of an implacable foe, and Italy of a source of perpetual discord.

The first use that Florence made of the peace was to attempt to recover Sarzana, which had been filched from her in 1479. Fregoso, who was in possession of the town, fearing that he should not be able to hold it, made it over to a rich Banking Corporation known as the Bank of S. George, that already owned the neighbouring town of Pietrasanta.¹ Florence now made war on this Bank, and before the end of 1484 Pietrasanta capitulated. Further operations for the recovery of Sarzana were, however, postponed, partly owing to Lorenzo's illness, and partly to the "Barons' War," in which Florence became involved, so that it was not till 1487 that Sarzana once more became a Florentine dependency.

Although Lorenzo's difficulties had been diminished by the death of Sixtus IV., they were not yet at an end. Within a year after the peace of Bagnolo the tranquillity of Italy was disturbed by the King of Naples. In June, 1485, an act of treachery on the part of the Duke of Calabria caused the Neapolitan barons, who had long groaned under the oppressive rule of his father, to break into open rebellion. Pope Innocent, who was engaged in a dispute with Ferdinand about the payment of tribute, gave them active support, and they received indirect aid from Venice. The King besought the assistance of Milan and Florence. From Lodovico he received profuse assurances of goodwill, but little else. For some time Lorenzo attempted to remain neutral, but finally, fearing that Naples was in danger of a crushing defeat, and that the balance of power would be thereby disturbed, he determined to side with the King.² He

¹ This remarkable company had its origin in the bankruptcy of the Genoese government in 1407, and it soon became as much a political as a financial institution. The government of the territories over which it exercised jurisdiction was exemplary.

² Possibly he was also influenced by gratitude to Ferdinand.

had some difficulty, however, in persuading his government to adopt this view, for both the King of Naples and his son the Duke of Calabria were detested in Florence. Cardinal Guilio della Rovere¹ and an ambassador from the King of France were both pressing Lorenzo to aid René II., whom the Pope had invited to revive the claims of the house of Anjou to the crown of Naples. It is said that the *Otto di Pratica* were almost to a man against Lorenzo when he announced his policy. At length, by eloquence and persistency, he prevailed, and a Florentine contingent was sent to reinforce the Neapolitan army. Nevertheless Lorenzo continued to negotiate with the Pope, and was unwearied in his efforts to put an end to the war. He was out of health, and the game that he had to play caused him much anxiety. The traditional dislike of the Aragonese dynasty in Florence increased his difficulties, and he was uneasy as to the treatment which the Florentine merchants in France might undergo. He knew that he could not trust either Ferdinand or Lodovico. The war was carried on but feebly, as both Pope and King had much to attend to in their own disordered dominions. At length, to the relief of most of those whom it concerned, the Pope suddenly consented to come to terms.² The news of the peace, which was signed on August 11th, was hailed with some joy in Florence, but the treaty did not give unmixed satisfaction, as it contained no mention of Sarzana. Accordingly in the following year Lorenzo resolved that this lost dependency should be recovered. This would have been difficult of accomplishment without occasioning a breach with Milan had not fortune favoured him. The Sarzana garrison made an unprovoked attack on the neighbouring fortress of Sarzanello, which belonged to Florence, and so gave the Florentines the right to retaliate. A punitive expedition was organised, which ended in the capture of Sarzana on June 21st, 1487. When Lorenzo, who had been present at the surrender, returned to Florence, he met with an enthusiastic reception from the people, "who attributed the capture of Sarzana to him above all others."³ It was not merely the acquisition of territory that was gratifying, but the seizure of Sarzana by Fregoso had been regarded as an insult which must be wiped out. Lorenzo was

¹ Afterwards Pope Julius II.

² The peace was an ignominious one for the Pope, who deserted his allies. The treacherous destruction of the barons by Ferdinand has rendered his name infamous.

³ Giudoni, cited by Reumont, ii. 257.

also "congratulated by all the princes of Italy on the termination of the war. Being thus completely free from foreign disturbances, and having perfect quiet at home, he gave himself up to the pleasures and elegancies of peace, occupying himself in the patronage of literature and in book-collecting, in beautifying the city, in bringing into cultivation the surrounding country, and in all those pursuits and studies that have made that age remarkable."¹

Shortly after the fall of Sarzana two important events in the Medici family took place. Lorenzo's second daughter, Maddalena, was betrothed to Franceschetto Cibò, a son of Innocent VIII., and his eldest son Piero to Alfonsina the daughter of Roberto Orsini. Both these alliances were fraught with present good and future ill. After Maddalena's marriage the Pope frequently allowed his policy to be guided by Lorenzo, and one of the disturbing elements in Italian affairs was thus subjected to a moderating influence. The remoter consequences of this alliance were disastrous both to Italy and Europe, as it occasioned the elevation of Clement VII. to the papacy. Piero's marriage also at first made for peace, as his father-in-law was a loyal supporter of Ferdinand, and the relations between Lorenzo and the King of Naples became more friendly. But it ultimately added to Piero's unpopularity, and some of the vicious traits in the characters of his descendants, Lorenzo, Alessandro, and Catherine, were probably due to the double strain of Orsini blood that was running in their veins. Piero's bride made her appearance in Florence on May 22nd, 1488, and her arrival was celebrated by banquets, spectacles, processions, and triumphal arches, all of unusual magnificence. It was about this time that Lorenzo lost his third daughter, Luigia,² who had been betrothed to Giovanni de' Medici (the grandson of Cosimo's brother Lorenzo), and at the end of the year he also lost his wife Clarice. Judging from a letter he wrote to the Pope, Lorenzo seems to have felt his wife's death deeply.³

How Lorenzo found time to pursue, as Ammirato says he did, the occupations that were so congenial to him, it is hard to understand, as he was incessantly harassed by foreign affairs. He had much difficulty in restraining the Pope from declaring war on

¹ Ammirato, vi. 97.

² Giovanni de' Medici subsequently married Girolamo Riario's widow, the celebrated Caterina Sforza.

³ Reumont, ii. 289.

Ferdinand for breaches of the treaty of 1486,¹ and the double-dealing of Lodovico il Moro increased his perplexities. The feuds among the smaller States required constant watchfulness, and without his intervention would often have assumed dangerous proportions. Italian politics were at this time a perfect labyrinth of intrigue and counter-intrigue, of veiled ill-will and mutual mistrust. Much of Lorenzo's official correspondence is extant, and it reveals a mastery of complex situations and a skill in dealing with conflicting interests, such as few statesmen have possessed. When his health was failing he watched over matters great and small which affected, if only remotely, the welfare of Florence. It is small wonder that he is said to have wished that he could bury himself for six months in some place where no rumour of Italian affairs could reach his ears.²

The disorderly state of Romagna almost involved Florence in war on two occasions. In 1488 Lorenzo's old enemy, Girolamo Riario, whose rule in Forlì had become intolerably oppressive, was assassinated. His courageous widow, Caterina Sforza, avenged her husband's death, suppressed the insurrection, and retained the government in her hands as regent for her infant son, Ottaviano. The Florentines took the opportunity to seize the village of Piancaldoli, of which Count Girolamo deprived them after the Pazzi conspiracy. This nearly occasioned a rupture with Lodovico, who feared a further extension of Florentine territory. Lorenzo ultimately supported Caterina, thinking it better that Forlì should be an independent state, even if subject to a Riario dynasty, than form part of either the papal or Milanese dominions. Rumour attributed Girolamo's death to Lorenzo, but it rests on no foundation.

Another tragedy occurred in the same year. Galeotto Manfredi, lord of Faenza, was murdered at the instance of his wife Francesca, daughter of Giovanni Bentivoglio, lord of Bologna. After much tumult, Astorre Manfredi, the infant son of Galeotto, was proclaimed lord under a Florentine protectorate. Giovanni Bentivoglio was kept in confinement by Lorenzo until the regency was established, and much ill feeling was in consequence engendered between Florence and Bologna. Later in the year the feud between the two powerful families of Oddi and Baglioni was occasioning bloodshed in the streets of Perugia. Lorenzo gave

¹ Ferdinand persisted in his refusal to pay tribute to the Pope and was exterminating the Barons.

² Reumont, ii. 269.

active support to the Baglioni, but it was not till 1491 that he succeeded in establishing their authority under the nominal suzerainty of the Church.

These were not the only States in which Lorenzo made his influence felt. The Neapolitan ambassador said that the Republic seemed as anxious to preserve peace abroad as at home, and that much Florentine gold had been expended with that object in Bologna, Perugia, Città di Castello, Faenza, and Siena.¹ And Guicciardini's description of the condition of Florence at this time is worth quoting. "The city," he says, "was in profound peace; the citizens who had the government in their hands were united and closely bound together; and their power was so well established that no man dared to oppose it. The people were regaled every day with spectacles, with festivals and novelties. They were well fed, for the city abounded with provisions, as industries of all kinds were thriving. Men of genius and ability were maintained, and posts established for the encouragement of Literature, Art, and every branch of Culture, and lastly the city enjoyed perfect tranquillity within its walls, and a great and glorious reputation abroad."²

An incident which occurred in 1488 throws some light on the authority which Lorenzo wielded. The gonfalonier, Neri Cambi, had punished four minor officials for some trifling neglect of duty by exclusion from office for four years, and the Signory had endorsed his action. Lorenzo disapproved of the proceeding, and on a new Signory coming into office, he caused the matter to be reviewed, when the officials were pardoned and Neri Cambi was disqualified for office for life.

In the following year Lorenzo saw what he most ardently desired on the brink of fulfilment. At a consistory held on March 9th, 1489, his son Giovanni was created a cardinal by Innocent VIII., but the publication of the honour was, on account of Giovanni's age, deferred for three years.³ Nevertheless it soon became an open secret, and there were great rejoicings in Florence. Lorenzo was having Giovanni specially trained for high office in the Church; the lad was already archbishop of Aix; he held other rich preferments to which he had been presented by the kings of France and Naples; and on the day of his nomination the Pope made him cardinal-archdeacon of S. Maria in Domenica.

¹ Reumont, ii. 307. ² Guicciardini, p. 82. ³ He was only thirteen.

The quarrel between the King of Naples and the Pope occupied much of Lorenzo's attention from 1489 almost to his death, and caused him much anxiety. Ferdinand continued to violate the treaty of 1486, and Lorenzo's powers of persuasion were taxed to the uttermost in preventing the Pope from attempting to enforce it. The whole situation is admirably reviewed by Lorenzo in his letters to his ambassador.¹ At length his efforts were crowned with success, and a settlement between the two potentates was arrived at in February, 1492.

Lorenzo had also a cause of anxiety nearer home in the growing influence of Savonarola. Shortly after the Friar's arrival in Florence his religious zeal gained him a reputation among the inmates of S. Marco, which led to an invitation to preach a course of Lenten sermons in the great church of S. Lorenzo. These, however, were not successful, and before Easter his congregation had dwindled to five-and-twenty persons. The cause of his failure is not far to seek. He was altogether out of sympathy with the spirit of his Age. The enthusiasm for Art and Letters, which was radiating from Florence throughout Italy, left him untouched, but he was deeply moved by the prevailing moral corruption. His denunciations of sin and calls to repentance, couched in colloquial language and enforced with homely similes, did not appeal to the cultivated Florentines, who looked upon sermons as rhetorical exercises.² Of the style of pulpit oratory which they admired, one Fra Mariano da Genazzano, a Franciscan friar for whom Lorenzo had built a convent outside the Porta San Gallo, was the great exponent. After hearing one of his discourses, Poliziano wrote: "I am all ears to the musical voice, the chosen words, the grand sentences. Then I note the clauses, recognise the periods, am swayed by their harmonious cadence."³ This was the standard by which Savonarola's early sermons were tried and found wanting.⁴ He was so greatly disheartened at his failure that he almost decided to abandon preaching, and he would probably have done so had not his superiors at San Marco sent him to attend a chapter at Reggio. There his vehement denunciations of ecclesiastical abuses made much sensation and his success restored his con-

¹ Reumont, ii. 410, 413-415.

² Creighton, iv. 169.

³ Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 79.

⁴ Fra Mariano's sermons are said to have been modelled on Ficino's addresses to the Platonic Academy. Savonarola's manner was a deliberate protest against this style.

fidence in his own powers.¹ In 1485 he was sent as Lenten Preacher to San Gimignano, and there he first assumed the rôle of prophet. Then it was that he predicted that the Church was quickly about to be scourged and reformed, predictions that henceforth pervaded and coloured much of his preaching. In the following year he was sent to Brescia, where his reputation as a preacher increased, and his name became known all over Italy. He remained in Lombardy till 1489, when, at Pico della Mirandola's request, Lorenzo caused him to be recalled to Florence. He commenced his work there by a course of lectures on the Apocalypse (which soon developed into sermons), in the beautiful garden within the cloister of San Marco, and the public thronged to hear him.² His first sermon in the church attached to the convent was a signal success, and after preaching in the Duomo, in Lent 1491, his ascendancy over the minds of a large section of the community was established. He was elected Prior of S. Mark's in the same year—a position which gave him increased independence. He assumed an attitude of hostility to Lorenzo, whose government he regarded as the source of Florentine corruption. It had been customary for a new Prior of S. Mark's convent, as it had been built and endowed by the Medici, to pay a ceremonial visit to the head of the house, but this Savonarola declined to do, on the ground that he owed his election to God alone. On hearing of this, Lorenzo remarked, "You see, a stranger has come into my house, and he does not think me fit to visit." Nevertheless Lorenzo respected Savonarola, and treated him with kindly consideration. His conciliatory efforts were, however, repulsed. He often visited the convent of S. Marco, but Savonarola invariably avoided meeting him. When five prominent citizens³ waited on Savonarola and advised him to moderate his language, he said, "I see that you are sent to me by Lorenzo. Tell him to repent of his sins, for the Lord spares no one, and fears not the princes of the earth"; and when it was hinted that he was in danger of banishment, he exclaimed, "I fear not your exile. . . . Though I am a stranger and Lorenzo the first citizen, I must remain and he

¹ It was at Reggio that Pico della Mirandola first became acquainted with Savonarola.

² A rose bush marks the spot in the cloister garden where he stood.

³ They were Domenico Bonsi, Guidantonio Vespucci, Paolo Antonio Soderini, Bernardo Rucellai, and Francesco Valori. All, with one exception, subsequently fell under Savonarola's influence.

must depart." It was after this interview that he predicted the speedy death of Lorenzo, the Pope, and the King of Naples. Lorenzo then tried to counteract Savonarola's influence by the preaching of Fra Mariano, but the polished periods of the Augustinian were powerless against the inspired eloquence of the Dominican. Moreover, the virulence of Fra Mariano's invective shocked even his own admirers, and he retired discomfited, leaving Savonarola in possession of the field.

The Council of Seventy had now been in existence for ten years, but for some reason or other it was not working entirely to Lorenzo's satisfaction. Possibly the Cambi incident had shown him that he had not got his government sufficiently in hand. Possibly the growing influence of Savonarola,¹ or his own financial embarrassments, were causing him uneasiness and pointing to the necessity for a more manageable executive. At any rate in 1490 the most important functions of the Seventy were temporarily transferred to a *Balla* of only seventeen members, of whom Lorenzo was one. The first measure passed by this newly constituted body related to the currency. It called in certain small coins (*quattrini novi*), which from their similarity to foreign coins of inferior value were occasioning inconvenience, and issued in their stead new coins (*quattrini bianchi*) of one-fifth greater value than the old ones. So far the reform was advantageous. But the government, after providing that all customs and taxes were to be paid in the new coinage, made their own payments in the old one. No act of Lorenzo's, except perhaps his dealings with the Dower Fund, ever did more to endanger his position than this petty fraud.

All through the year 1491 the disease from which Lorenzo suffered had been making rapid progress. His attacks of gout had become more frequent and the waters of Morba, which had in the past given him some relief, now proved ineffective. At the beginning of 1492 he could see no one, and he was quite unequal to attend to business. The three years that were to elapse before it was publicly announced that his son Giovanni had been made a cardinal expired in March, and there were great rejoicings. But Lorenzo was too ill to take part in the solemnities attending the proclamation, and was only able to be carried

¹ Armstrong (p. 305) questions this on the ground that Lorenzo's influence with the Pope was so great that he could at any moment have procured Savonarola's removal.

on a litter into the banqueting-hall in his palace in the evening, just to see the brilliant company who were assembled to do honour to his son. His mind was, however, still clear, and after the young cardinal had left for Rome on March 12th he wrote him a long letter of affectionate and sage counsel.¹ This letter has been likened to the advice which Polonius gave to Laertes. It reveals the same knowledge of human nature, but it breathes a more religious spirit. After reminding his son that he should be thankful to God for his promotion, he tells him that he can best show his thankfulness "by an honest, virtuous, exemplary life." He exhorts him to persevere in his studies, to be regular in the performance of his religious duties, and he adds, "As you are going to Rome, the very sink of iniquity, the difficulty of following my advice will naturally be greater; for not only does example have its influence, but you will have no lack of evil counsellors and tempters."

At the time that he wrote this letter his condition was hopeless. On March 21st he was taken to his villa at Careggi, his favourite abode, where he prepared for his end. He had a conversation with his son Piero about public affairs, and he wished his old friends Poliziano and Pico della Mirandola farewell. Turning to both he said, "I wish that death had spared me till I had completed your libraries." He then sent for a priest, who administered to him the viaticum. He attempted to receive it kneeling, but was too weak to do so, and was obliged to lie down. Shortly afterwards Savonarola entered the room. Whether he had been sent for or not by Lorenzo is uncertain, and there are two very different accounts of what took place at the interview. According to Poliziano's version,² which is on the whole the most worthy of credence, Savonarola admonished the dying man to hold fast to the Faith, to which Lorenzo replied that he did so. Secondly, he exhorted him to amend his life, to which Lorenzo answered that he would endeavour to do so. Finally, he urged him to meet death, if need be, with fortitude. "Nothing could be more pleasing to me, if it be God's will," said Lorenzo. Savonarola was about

¹ The original, copied from Fabroni, is given in Roscoe's *Lorenzo de' Medici*, Appendix lxvi. For English translations, see *Ibid.*, vol. ii. 146-151, and Reumont, ii. 450-552.

² Poliziano's narrative receives some corroboration from a letter written by Benedetto Dei, only a week after Lorenzo's death (Armstrong, p. 310, note).

to depart when Lorenzo said, "Give me your blessing, father, before you leave me." And with bowed head and pious mien he joined in Savonarola's prayers, quite undisturbed by the grief which those around were unable to control. Shortly after Savonarola had gone a crucifix was held before him, he raised himself to kiss it, fell back and died.¹

It is not impossible that his end was hastened by medical treatment. Lazaro of Pavia, a famous Lombard doctor, who had been sent to attend him by Lodovico il Moro, gave him a mixture containing pulverised pearls and precious stones. The

¹ The other story of what occurred at Lorenzo's death-bed is that given by Pico and Burlamacchi and Savonarola's other biographers. According to them Lorenzo, in an agony of remorse, had sent for Savonarola, saying, "I know no true friar but him." The sins that were troubling his conscience, it is said, were the sack of Volterra, the bloodshed after the Pazzi conspiracy, and the misappropriation of some of the Dower Fund. These three sins he confessed to Savonarola, who endeavoured to relieve his remorse by repeating, "God is gracious, God is gracious." The friar then said, "Three things are required of you. First, to have a lively faith in God's mercy." Lorenzo replied, "I have." "Secondly, to restore what you have unjustly taken, or bind your sons to do so." Lorenzo paused and then assented by a movement of his head. "Lastly, you must restore to the people of Florence their freedom." Lorenzo turned away his head without answering, and the friar left him unabsolved.

It should be noticed that this story admittedly rests on hearsay evidence, and that it was not published till fifty years after Lorenzo's death, whereas Poliziano wrote some six weeks after the event of what he had himself seen. Only Savonarola (according to one of his biographers) was present when Lorenzo made his confession, therefore what took place must have been repeated by Savonarola or Lorenzo. Two of the biographers (whom all the others follow) say that they had the story from Savonarola's own lips, "but we may be pardoned," as Bishop Creighton well observes, "for sparing Savonarola's fame the supposition that he made political capital for his own glorification out of the secrets of the confessional; still less probable is it that the tale was revealed by Lorenzo in an agony of remorse—after Savonarola's departure and just before his death" (Creighton, iv. 341). And the story is on the face of it, in other respects, almost incredible. Lorenzo's dealing with the Dower Fund may have been disturbing his peace of mind, but for the sack of Volterra and the massacre after the Pazzi conspiracy he was so remotely responsible that it is hardly likely that either weighed on his conscience at his death. The one was the result of an accident, and the other was perpetrated in spite of Lorenzo's remonstrances. Again, Savonarola's last alleged requirement of Lorenzo is preposterous. The friar, as will be seen by his subsequent conduct, understood something of practical politics, and he must have known that he was asking what it was impossible for the dying man to perform. In short, the story is not only replete with improbabilities, but it presupposes that Savonarola was both faithless and foolish.

For a careful examination of the relative credibility of the two accounts of this scene, see Creighton, iv. 340-343. Villari arrives at an opposite conclusion to Creighton (see his *Life of Savonarola*, i. 168-172). Reumont (ii. 487-489) expresses no definite opinion on the matter. There is a third account of Lorenzo's death by Bartolommeo Cerretani (Reumont, ii. 487), which makes no mention of Savonarola's visit.

body of Pier Leoní, an eminent physician who attended Lorenzo throughout his illness, but who is said to have misunderstood the case, was found, on the morning after his death, at the bottom of a well in the garden of Francesco Martelli's villa near the Porta Pinta. Whether he had committed suicide or his end was occasioned by foul play is not known, but his death gave rise to a rumour in Rome that Lorenzo had been murdered.

Lorenzo's death occurred on April 8th, 1492.

Lorenzo died in his forty-fourth year. He was above the middle height and strongly built. His face was distinctly ugly. His complexion was sallow, his eyes weak, his nose flat, but, if Vasari's portrait¹ of him is reliable, his expression was not unpleasing. It is said he was destitute of the sense of smell. His voice was harsh and his movements were ungainly. But in spite of all these physical disadvantages his personality was strangely fascinating. Whatever was most brilliant in the spirit of the Italian Renaissance seemed to be embodied in him.² In versatility of mind and many-sidedness of character he has seldom been equalled. He was among the foremost statesmen and foremost poets of his day; he was a good musician, a good architect, a good farmer, and a consummate judge of painting and sculpture.³ He was a collector of books and a breeder of racehorses. Hawking, hunting, and all kinds of amusement had charms for him, yet he was indefatigable in his attention to affairs of State.⁴ He would romp with his children at home, or discuss philosophy in the Platonic Academy, with equal zest. He could write with ease and grace both ribald and sacred songs. He would leave a party of roystering friends to attend Mass.⁵ But though he conformed to and respected religious observances, he never scrupled to set the Church at defiance in the interests of his country. His Christianity was genuine, but, like that of most of the Humanists, it was saturated with Platonism. Although sociable and hospitable, his mode of living was homely except when entertaining distinguished guests.⁶ His manners, too, were free from ostentation, and he always wore the garb of

¹ In the Uffizi.

² Symonds, iv. 144.

³ Landino cited in Armstrong, p. 291, note.

⁴ Gino Capponi, ii. 427.

⁵ Armstrong, p. 301.

⁶ "Il vivere suo più compagnevole che fastoso" (Gino Capponi, ii. 422), and see an extract from Serdonati's *Vita e fatti di Innocenzo VIII.* cited in the *Monthly Review* for March, 1902, p. 118.

a simple citizen. He numbered among his friends men of widely different natures, and none of them ever turned to him for help in vain. He was not cruel by nature, though he could be merciless when his policy seemed to require it, as is instanced by his conduct after the Pazzi conspiracy, when it may be remembered that while he endeavoured to check the blind vengeance of the mob, the judicial sentences on the ringleaders and their relatives were terribly severe. He was a good son and an affectionate father. His private life was not stainless,¹ but no facts have been adduced in support of the charge of unbridled profligacy which has been brought against him. Judged by the standards of his day he was not an immoral man.

On these matters there is a tolerable unanimity of opinion, but the estimates which have been formed of Lorenzo's public character, by his contemporaries as well as posterity, differ curiously. Over both, his personality (like that of our own Oliver Cromwell) seems to have exercised a spell. There was that about him, when regarded as a ruler, which inflames the imagination of those who would analyse his motives, and seems to compel undue admiration or unmerited blame.

Is it true, as declared at a meeting of the Councils held three days after his funeral, that "he always subordinated his present interest to the advantage and benefit of the community; shrank neither from trouble nor danger for the good of the State and its freedom; and devoted to that object all his thoughts and powers, securing public order by excellent laws"?² Or was he "the most pernicious and cruel of tyrants," as Rinuccini, who knew him, affirms?³ And passing to writers of recent times, is Roscoe right in asserting that his was an "ambition to deserve rather than to enjoy," and that it is "impossible to discover, either in his conduct or his precepts, anything that ought to stigmatise him as an enemy to the freedom of his country."⁴ Or are we to believe that he was a usurper who embezzled the moneys of the State, and who had no higher aim than his own interest or that of his family; that the enslavement of Florence was "the hard work of his manhood," and that for this end he deliberately debauched and enervated his subjects by bribery and corruption,

¹ A *liaison* between him and Bartolomea, the wife of Donato Benci, existed for many years (Guicciardini, p. 88).

² Reumont, ii. 463.

³ Cambi, who was also a contemporary, calls him "a haughty tyrant, worse than the Duke of Athens" (Perrens' *History of Florence*, i. 431).

⁴ Roscoe, ii. 241, 242.

by amusement, and by the prostitution of Art and Letters, as Sismondi, and Villari, Perrens, Symonds, and Trollope allege?"¹ It is hardly to be expected that in a eulogium passed on him by his sorrowing fellow-citizens we shall find a critical estimate of his character, and it must be admitted that the picture which Roscoe draws of his hero is highly coloured. Still, if the grounds on which the several counts in the indictment which has been brought against him by Sismondi and others are examined, it will be found that hardly any of them can be sustained without qualification.

The charge that he is a usurper is soon disposed of. At the very outset of his career, at the midnight meeting in S. Antonio, the mantle of authority which Cosimo had gradually assumed was voluntarily placed upon Lorenzo's shoulders by his fellow-citizens, and that it was worn by him at his death with their consent, is evident from the fact that 483 out of 546 senators voted for the resolution which has just been quoted. It is impossible to gainsay Hallam's dictum on this matter. "If a people's wish," he says, "to resign their freedom gives a title to accept the government of a country, the Medici were no usurpers."²

There is probably more truth in the accusation that Lorenzo abstracted moneys from the Treasury,³ but he did so for objects of a national or quasi-national character, and not from avarice or private extravagance.⁴ Far the largest portion of the moneys that were secretly disbursed by him went in subsidies to foreign States, without which the pacification of Italy could not have been effected. Some were employed in averting the failure of his own bank, and even this was not as gross a fraud as it at first sight appears, for the insolvency of the Medici would have shaken the credit of Florence not only in Italy, but throughout Europe. It would have been regarded as national bankruptcy

¹ Sismondi, vii. 290; Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 36, 39, 45; Perrens' *History of Florence*, i. 431; Symonds, ii. 315, 318, iii. 264, iv. 369, 386; Symonds' *Sketches and Studies in Italy* (1879), 144, 145; Trollope, iii. 469. There is an able defence of Lorenzo's character by Ernesto Masi in *La Vita Italiana nel Rinascimento*, pp. 1-30. Hallam, Burckhardt, and Gregorovius take a more sane and discriminating view of the matter than most historians.

² Hallam's *Europe during the Middle Ages* (1819), i. 542.

³ The grounds on which this charge rests have been already mentioned.

⁴ That private extravagance led Lorenzo to embezzle public moneys is one of those random statements, which occasionally occur in the learned works of Professor Villari, and blemish what is otherwise so admirable. See his *Savonarola*, p. 39. Gino Capponi (vol. ii. p. 422) is on this point more trustworthy.

and its political consequences would have been incalculable. This, at least, seems to have been the view of the Florentine government, for on one occasion money was voted to save the Medici from failure.¹ Lastly, it is probable, although there is no positive proof, that the cost of entertaining foreigners of distinction in the Casa Medici was partially defrayed out of public funds. If this were so, it should be borne in mind that, although no grant was made to him for the purpose, Lorenzo was expected to offer royal hospitality on behalf of the Republic, and to maintain a princely position which had been implicitly acknowledged by the government when it ordered a bodyguard to attend him, and when it decreed that an attempt on his life was High Treason. Reprehensible some of these transactions undoubtedly were, but only prejudice will stigmatise them as "peculations" or "embezzlement."²

Nor can it be maintained that Lorenzo "enslaved" or made himself the "tyrant" of Florence in the ordinary acceptation of those terms. The enslavement which he accomplished was certainly not of a formal character, for with the exception of the establishment of the *Settanta* he left the constitution much as he found it.³ The *Settanta* was no doubt an innovation, but it was created by a representative assembly, and it did not alter Lorenzo's legal status. That the elected Councils still possessed real power is sufficiently evidenced by the summary manner in which, within three years of Lorenzo's death, they dismissed Piero when they found him to be worthless. His position, even at the end of his career, had but little in common with that of the Visconti, the Baglioni, or the Malatesta. It was rather that of a President of a Republic who had been chosen, not by ballot, but as the Society of Friends transact their business, by the general sense of the meeting without any formal vote; who had been so elected without even any understanding as to the duration or limitations of his office: and who had contrived to concentrate in his own person illicit powers, which he used without scruple for national and personal ends.⁴

¹ Valori, p. 38, cited in Roscoe, ii. 133.

² Although it hardly affects the question of Lorenzo's honesty, it may be mentioned that he sometimes raised money for the benefit of the State on the credit of his own firm (Roscoe, ii. 132).

³ It is said that had he attained the legal age of forty-five he would have demanded the gonfaloniership for life. This may be true, but it does not affect the question under consideration.

⁴ Powers in some respects analogous to those of the Tammany ring.

Nevertheless, although he was but tenant-at-will of the presidency of a Republic, he was permitted to wield arbitrary powers. He wrote the despatches to other States and communications to the Republic were addressed to him. He moulded the foreign policy of Florence, for the *Otto di Pratica* had not the hardihood to oppose his wishes. He had practically unlimited control over the Exchequer, for he expended public money which had not been voted to him and he was never called to account. He arranged and vetoed matrimonial alliances with a view to consolidating his power, and the parties concerned did not venture to demur.¹ But he was careful not to commit the faults of his predecessors. He did not openly interfere with constitutional forms like the *Neri* nobles; he made no use of admonitions like the Captains of the *Parte Guelfa*, or of violence like the two triumvirates; but his real grip of State affairs in every department was far firmer than theirs.

Such was the nature of the enslavement to which Lorenzo had subjected Florence. It is not surprising that some who felt it galling should have designated it a tyranny, for even Savonarola was said by his opponents to have made himself "tyrant of Florence."² It was the tyranny (in so far as it may be correctly so called) of a dominating personality and a subtle brain. The large majority of Florentines cheerfully submitted to the yoke, and it is their submissive spirit which mainly constitutes the corruption that Lorenzo's policy is said to have occasioned. But in truth that corruption sprang from causes for which he was in no way responsible. Italy was exhausted by centuries of internecine strife between State and State and party and party, and at the moment when Lorenzo lived political institutions were everywhere tending to despotism.³ The progress of the disease had not been so rapid in Florence as elsewhere, but it was quite as deep-seated, and it had been contracted at a date when the house of Medici was unknown. The virulent animosities which, as has been shown, had a racial origin early in the twelfth century,⁴ and which had been handed down from generation to generation, mani-

¹ It may be remarked that the Florentines were not unaccustomed to similar interferences with their freedom. Marriages between hostile families had been enforced by Cardinal Latino in 1280 and prohibited by the *Parte Guelfa* in 1393.

² Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 71, 72.

³ Symonds, ii. 319.

⁴ In 1113 when the Teutonic barons were constrained to dwell among the Latin burghers.

festing themselves now in faction fights,¹ now in family feuds,² had borne their natural fruit. Perpetual strife had made self-government in Florence impossible, and her weary citizens welcomed the masterful ruler who could give them even a respite from turmoil and discord.³

The corruption affecting Florence in common with the rest of Italy was, however, aggravated by another cause. On the top of the exhaustion, produced by feud and faction, came a great wave of Hellenism—so æsthetically invigorating, so politically enervating—which corrupted (at least on one side of their character) the Italians of the Renaissance, just as it had corrupted their hardier ancestors in the days of Cæsar Augustus. And it is this enfeebling influence which Lorenzo is charged with having deliberately augmented for his own advantage.⁴ No doubt he represented the worst as well as the best spirit of his age.⁵ Pleasure-loving himself he ministered to the popular craving for sensuous amusement. He organised festivities, he caused pageants to be arranged and triumphal cars to be decorated by the best artists of the day, and he wrote erotic verses to be sung or recited by the performers.⁶ Nor, can it be questioned, that he was well aware that by so doing he was increasing his popularity and thereby securing his position.⁷ But spectacles and processions of dancing boys and girls were no new things in Florence. Those of the preceding century described by Villani, if less artistic, were hardly less magnificent than those in the days of Lorenzo, and the Florentines had been accustomed for many generations to semi-disguised obscenity in their vernacular poetry.⁸ Lorenzo was but presenting, in a more perfect form, what he found ready to hand in the life of the people. The charge that he debased the popular taste by the deliberate

¹ e.g. the *Grandi* and *Popolani*, Guelphs and Ghibellines, *Bianchi* and *Neri*.

² The Buondelmonti and Amidei, the Adimari and Tosinghi, the Cerchi and Donati, the Ricci and Albizzi, etc.

³ There can be no doubt that, but for the Medicean influence, the Pazzi and Strozzi, the Acciaiuoli, Soderini and Valori, would have been struggling for ascendancy just as the Uberti and Donati, the Ricci and Albizzi had been in the past.

⁴ This charge has been most unfairly pressed by Professor Villari in his *Life of Savonarola*, vol. i. p. 45.

⁵ Symonds, iv. 387; Symonds' *Sketches and Studies in Italy* (1879), p. 144; Villari's *Savonarola*, p. 45.

⁶ Symonds, iv. 388. These were the famous *Ballate* and *Carnascialeschi*.

⁷ Machiavelli, p. 344; Guicciardini, p. 91.

⁸ Villari, lib. vii. cap. 89; Symonds, v. 355.

introduction of licentiousness into Art and Literature is absolutely without foundation.¹ But granting that Lorenzo was in no way responsible for the prevailing corruption, the questions may fairly be asked, Would he, had he been a man of lofty aims, have utilised it for his own advantage? Could he not by wise and well-timed reforms have stayed its progress? Very possibly he had none of the aspirations of a reformer. It is hardly likely that the idea, that it was any part of the duty of a ruler to leave the world a little better than he found it, ever crossed his mind. Still it should be remembered how one whose zeal for the highest good of his fellow-citizens, and whose singleness of purpose are above suspicion; one who was, spiritually, as superior to Lorenzo as Paul was to Augustus; one who devoted all his energy, ability, and influence, which were tremendous, to elevate the character of the Florentines and to provide them with a truly representative government, altogether failed in his life's mission. The signal failure of Savonarola to regenerate Florentine society, and to reform the Florentine constitution, cannot but suggest the thought that Lorenzo had a deeper insight into the character of his countrymen than the Friar, and a truer conception of the moral and political forces that were at work in Italy at the end of the fifteenth century. If Savonarola, with all his enthusiasm and integrity, and with a popularity which was at one time greater than that of Lorenzo, failed in giving to Florence a genuine democracy, *a fortiori* Lorenzo would have failed.² The Florentines, practically though unconsciously, endorsed Lorenzo's judgment on their political possibilities when, ten years after his death, they found it necessary to appoint Piero Soderini gonfalonier for life.

Lorenzo's thorough knowledge of the conditions under which he was working will become even more evident, when the charge that he had no higher aim than his own interest, or that of his family, is examined. Those who bring this accusation ignore the peculiarities of the Medicean system of government and the circumstances under which it was evolved. Its most marked feature (according to some its worst evil) was the displacement³

¹ Symonds, iv. 39. Much of his poetry, as will be shown later, was of an elevating and some of a devotional character.

² Savonarola had come to the conclusion before his death that a permanent gonfalonier was a necessity (Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 359).

³ Reumont, ii. 471. Florence was not unused to such displacement. For nearly a century the real direction of affairs was in the hands of the *Parte Guelfa*, a body which had no legal status.

of authority from its legal centre. This was no doubt a source of weakness, because it rendered the system unworkable except in the hands of a man of consummate ability. Nevertheless a divorce of outward form from real power was the *sine qua non*, the very essence, of the government of the early Medici. That government was in fact the resultant of two forces. It was a compromise between a popular demand for republican forms and a popular demand for an efficient administration. The first made the rule of a recognised sovereign, or, indeed, of any legally constituted oligarchy, impossible; and, under existing conditions, no genuine democracy or veiled oligarchy would satisfy the second.

This was the lesson which the past history of Florence had emphatically taught. Almost every conceivable form of government had been tried and had been rejected, because it did not satisfy one or other of these requirements. The absolute despotism of the Duke of Athens, and the modified lordships of Charles of Anjou, Charles of Valois, and the sons of the kings of Naples, were alike an offence to the independent burghers of Florence. The helm of affairs had been entrusted to the *grandi*, the *popolo grasso*,¹ the *popolo minuto*, and the *ciompi*, who all essayed in turn to steer the ship of the State under a Republican flag, and all had been forced to relinquish it through incompetence. Nor had these changes for the most part been made in undue haste, or without attempting by minor administrative reforms to give the government for the time being a chance of success. Innumerable representative councils, committees, and boards were created, and innumerable methods of electing their members devised. Consuls were superseded by *podestà*, then followed a *capitano del popolo*, and both of these functionaries were supplanted by a gonfalonier, while a *bargello* was occasionally given dictatorial powers. All of these experiments had hitherto failed. It was a sign of political genius on the part of Cosimo to devise, and of rare political sagacity on the part of Lorenzo to uphold, a system which satisfied apparently irreconcilable conditions. Cosimo, his son, and grandson successively gave to Florence what she had never possessed before—a government that maintained order at home and commanded respect abroad, and one

¹ The *popolo grasso*, when the Albizzi faction were supreme, approached nearer success than any other class, but the efficiency of their government was attained only by a tyranny (far greater than that of Lorenzo) which was insupportable.

with which she was sufficiently contented to tolerate without essential change for close upon sixty years.

There can be no doubt that Lorenzo fully realised the weakness of the system.¹ He knew that if the fabric of government, which he and his ancestors had built up, fell into incompetent hands, it would crumble to dust. But knowing this, he knew also that it was under the circumstances the best possible system—the only one, in fact, which had even a chance of permanency, and that he was the only man who could sustain it. To have abandoned the post to which he had been called by his fellow-citizens would have been culpable weakness.² The supremacy of Lorenzo and the prosperity of his country were interdependent. Thus it was that Patriotism and Ambition pointed in the same direction. But Lorenzo must be also credited with a third motive, namely Self-preservation. The choice for him was not one between sovereignty and obscurity. The suspicious Florentines would never have allowed anyone, who had occupied so exalted a position, to retire into private life. His only choice lay between supremacy and banishment or death. So we may reasonably assume that Lorenzo, like most human beings, was actuated by mixed motives. It is folly to suppose that while working for the national good he was unmoved by self-interest. It is malice to assert that he regarded the well-being of Florence as a mere stepping-stone to his own ascendancy.

It is not, however, on Lorenzo's versatility of intellect or successful statesmanship that his reputation now rests, but rather on his patronage of Art and Letters.³ In this respect he was as superior to Cosimo, as he was his inferior in matters of finance. And there was, as far as literature is concerned, this vital difference between the patronage of the two men—the encouragement which Cosimo gave to authorship was of the ordinary kind—an encouragement (often debasing) which wealth can always give to intellect. Lorenzo could hold his own with any poet of his day, and the homage which contemporary writers rendered him was that which genius pays to genius. In this respect his position was unique. As has been well pointed

¹ It is convenient to speak of it as a system, but it would be more accurate to describe it (as Mr. John Morley so well describes Cromwell's government) as an "expedient of individual supremacy."

² "It is a mischievous scrupulosity which shrinks from doing right because the right course is also recommended by selfish motives" (Leslie Stephen, *Monthly Review*, January, 1901).

³ Garnett, p. 113.

out he played a triple rôle, united before or since in no single individual. He was at once the Virgil, the Mæcenas, and the Augustus of his age.

Marsilio Ficino, Cristoforo Landino, Angelo Poliziano, Luigi Pulci, Leon Battista Alberti, and Pico della Mirandola were the men whom he delighted to honour and with whom he loved to associate. All of them were prominent members of the celebrated Platonic Academy, which held its meetings either in Lorenzo's Florentine palace or in one of his beautiful summer residences.¹ The chief characteristic of this brilliant circle of which Lorenzo was the centre was a passion for a higher and idealistic philosophy.² "If Plato has been studied more exactly of late years, he has never been loved better or more devotedly worshipped than by the Florentine Academy."³ A lamp was kept perpetually burning before his bust by this little society, and they celebrated the anniversary of his birth and death (November 7th) with solemn ceremonies.⁴ Some idea of the discussions, in which Lorenzo and his friends indulged, may be gathered from Cristoforo Landino's *Disputationum Camaldulensium*. On one occasion the relative advantages of an active or contemplative life (in which Lorenzo advocates the former and Leon Battista Alberti the latter) is the subject debated; and on another, the allegorical significance of Virgil's poetry in connection with Plato's philosophy.⁵

Lorenzo was, by a process of natural selection, the leader of this intellectual coterie whose mission was the spread of a new culture. And with every branch of the movement which was pulsating from Florence throughout Italy he was in sympathy. He largely added to the library which Cosimo had formed. Foreign monasteries were searched by his agents for manuscripts of the classics, and he employed scribes to copy those of which he failed to obtain originals.⁶ "Your diligence in having Greek works copied, and the favour you show to scholars," wrote Poliziano to Lorenzo, "procures for you such honour and attachment as no one has enjoyed for many years."⁷ His books were housed in the Casa Medici and in the convents of S. Marco, Fiesole, and San Gallo.⁸ It is said that as early as 1472 he

¹ Lorenzo had villas at Fiesole, Caffagiolo, Careggi, and Poggio a Caiano.

² Burckhardt, p. 221.

³ Symonds, ii. 328.

⁴ Ficino gives an account of these birthday feasts in a letter to Bracciolini (Symonds, ii. 329).

⁵ Symonds, ii. 338-341.

⁶ Reumont, ii. 112.

⁷ *Ibid.*, ii. 113.

⁸ A catalogue of the Medici library, dated 1495, is extant.

contemplated erecting a building for the reception of his whole library, but the project was obstructed, probably by financial difficulties. Nor was he content with the mere accumulation of the sources of knowledge. Through his influence and liberality the University of Pisa was resuscitated and became one of the most famous in Europe.¹

Lorenzo's patronage of Art stands on a somewhat different footing. The artists of his day could not, like the poets, regard him as one of themselves, but he recognised the claims of the aristocracy of talent, and associated on equal terms with sculptors and painters who were in comparatively humble circumstances. He had, moreover, a sympathetic insight into all that was truly artistic, and an eagle eye for detecting youthful genius.² Chancing to see the mask of a grinning fawn, which Michelangelo had sculptured when fifteen years old, Lorenzo at once made the lad an inmate of the Casa Medici, where he resided for over two years and was treated as one of the family.³

With a view of founding a school of sculpture, he placed many works of ancient and modern statuary which he had collected, together with casts from the antique, in the garden adjoining the convent of S. Marco, under the care of Bertoldo, a pupil of Donatello, who was a good medallist and clever caster of battle-pieces.⁴ To this collection promising young artists were allowed access for the purposes of study, and it was Bertoldo's duty to instruct them. Michelangelo, Torrigiano, Lorenzo di Credi, Granacci, Braccio Montelupo, Rusticci, and others of lesser note availed themselves of this opportunity of improvement. Vasari asserts that every young man who studied in this garden distinguished himself.⁵ There was hardly a painter or sculptor of renown who did not, either directly or indirectly, receive some benefit at the hands of Lorenzo.⁶ Three of Botticelli's finest

¹ Reumont, ii. 96-103.

² Lorenzo was not without artistic capacity, for he designed a façade for the Duomo which, twenty years after his death, was erected in wood and painted by Andrea del Sarto.

³ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 23. Vasari (vol. 234) says that he resided four years with Lorenzo. Lorenzo allowed Michelangelo five ducats a month while in his house and gave his father a post in the Customs.

⁴ Vasari, v. 232; Perkins, i. 157.

⁵ Vasari, v. 61.

⁶ Benozzo Gozzoli was employed at Pisa between 1469 and 1485, or he would doubtless have worked for Lorenzo. He had decorated the chapel in the Riccardi Palace before 1469. Perugino was in Florence from time to time between 1469 and 1492, but there is no record of his ever having been employed by Lorenzo.

works (The Birth of Venus, Spring, and Pallas) were executed to his order, and it was through his influence that Domenico Ghirlandajo painted the frescoes in S. Trinità, S. Maria Novella, and the Palazzo Vecchio. Verrocchio seems to have been Lorenzo's favourite sculptor, and he executed many works for him, among others, the bronze David in the Bargello, and the Boy with a Dolphin in the *cortile* of the Palazzo Vecchio. Filippino Lippi and Baldovinetti assisted in the decoration of his villas, and through his recommendation Giuliano da Majano and Leonardo da Vinci found almost lifelong employment at the Courts of Naples and Milan.¹ Among other celebrated artists to whom he gave commissions were Signorelli, Benedetto da Majano, Andrea del Castagno, and the brothers Pollaiuoli. He also encouraged all who showed proficiency as medallists, gem-cutters, or mosaicists. He was an indefatigable collector of all that was beautiful, and his palace "formed a museum, at the period unique, considering the number and value of its art treasures—bas-reliefs, vases, coins, engraved stones, paintings by the best contemporary masters, statues in bronze and marble by Verrocchio and Donatello."² Giovanni delle Corniole, whose likeness of Savonarola is said to be one of the finest *cinquecento* gems, perfected himself in his craft by the study of Lorenzo's intaglios.

Lorenzo was as fond of building as his grandfather, but he was not able to gratify his taste to the same extent through want of money.

The year 1492, in which Lorenzo died, was pregnant with disaster for Italy, and it is one of the most memorable dates in history. It was in that year that Columbus discovered America; that Roderigo Borgia became Pope; that Charles VIII. became *de facto* King of France; and that Spain, by the conquest of Granada, became a nation. By the first of these events the commerce of the world was diverted into new channels; by the second the Reformation was hastened; and by the third and fourth Italy was enslaved. "Thus the commercial, the spiritual, and the political sceptre fell in this one year from the grasp of the Italians."³

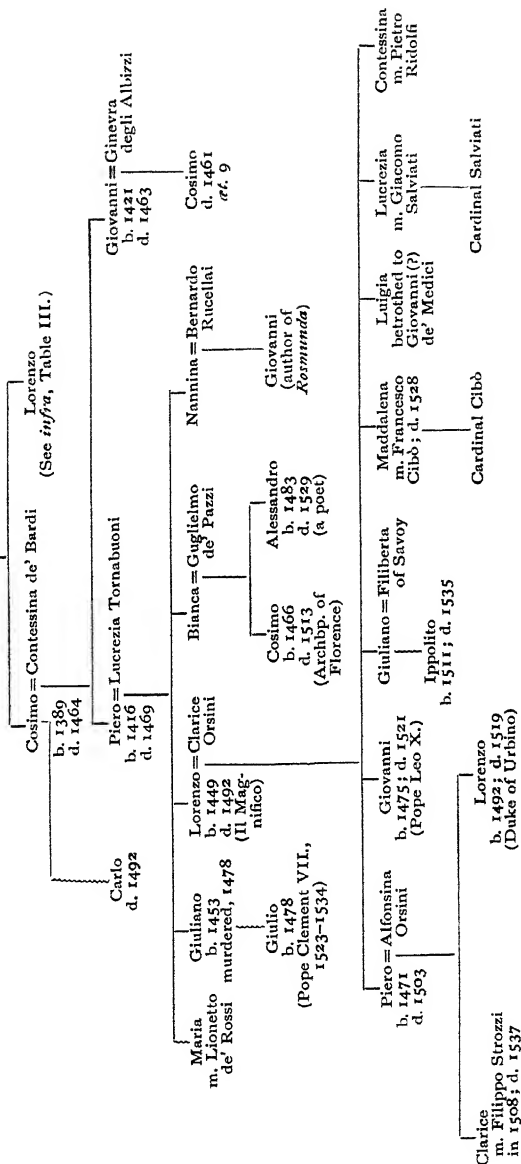
¹ Leonardo was sent to Milan on account of his excellence as a flute-player (Julia Cartwright's *Beatrice d'Este*, p. 42).

² Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 24.

³ Symonds, i. 493.

MEDICI PEDIGREE. (TABLE II.)

Giovanni de' Medici = Picarda Bueri
(See ante, Table I.)



Lorenzo left three sons and three daughters. Piero, his eldest son, who succeeded him; Giovanni, who became Leo X.; Giuliano, the father of Ippolito; Maddalena, who married Franceschetto Cibò; Lucrezia, who married Giacomo Salviati; and Contessina, who married Pietro Ridolfi.

CHAPTER XIX

(1469-1492)

ART AND LITERATURE DURING THE LAURENTIAN ERA

ARCHITECTS	SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	WRITERS
Benedetto da Majano	Antonio Rossellino	Botticelli	Lorenzo de' Medici
Giuliano da San Gallo	Mino da Fiesole	Filippino Lippi	Poliziano
Bramante	Luca della Robbia	D. Ghirlandajo	Ficino
	Andrea della Robbia	Andrea Verrocchio	Luigi Pulci
	Antonio Pollaiuolo	Leonardo da Vinci	Pico della Miran- dola
	Andrea Verrocchio	Perugino	Cristoforo Landino
	Benedetto da Majano	Lorenzo di Credi	Vespasiano
	Giuliano da Majano	The Pollaiuoli	Benevieni
	Andrea Sansovino	Cosimo Rosselli	
		Piero di Cosimo	
		Baldovinetti	

ARCHITECTURE

THERE was hardly a sign of stylistic decadence in Florentine Renaissance Architecture during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, though the three great architects—Brunelleschi, Michelozzi, and Alberti—who had raised it to the highest level which it ever attained, had passed away. They found worthy successors in Benedetto da Majano and Giuliano da San Gallo, nevertheless the era of Lorenzo (probably owing to his pecuniary embarrassments) is not as conspicuous for the number, or (with one exception) the magnificence, of its buildings as was that of Cosimo. By far the noblest building now standing which belongs to this period—built, not by the Medici, but by a rival family of merchant princes—is the Palazzo Strozzi, which was commenced by Filippo Strozzi the elder in 1489.

It was designed by the sculptor-architect **BENEDETTO DA MAJANO** (1442-1497), the son of Antonio, a stone-cutter, who lived at the village of Majano outside Florence.¹ It is a

¹ Antonio had two other sons, Giuliano (who will be mentioned later), and Giovanni, a sculptor of no great note (Perkins, i. 227).

thoroughly characteristic specimen of Florentine domestic architecture in the days of the early Medici, being built of huge blocks of rock-faced masonry, with a cornice of unusual boldness. This building alone is sufficient to place Benedetto in the front rank of Renaissance architects. Most of his life was, however, devoted to sculpture, but he was, if Vasari is right, employed by the Signory to build two rooms over the Sala dei Dugento in the erection of which no little ingenuity was required.¹

GIULIANO DA SAN GALLO (1445-1517) belongs to a Florentine family of artists whose surname was Giamberti.² He was an architect, sculptor, *intarsiatore*, and military engineer. His architectural talents were much esteemed by Lorenzo de' Medici, who employed him to build a large conventual church outside the San Gallo Gate for the Augustinian Friars (said to have been a very noble building), which was destroyed at the siege in 1529. It was from the situation of this edifice that Giuliano took his name, which was adopted by other members of his family. One of the finest of his buildings is the splendid villa at Poggio a Caiano, between Florence and Pistoja, which he also built for Lorenzo. The Palazzo Panciatichi was built by him and his brother Antonio for their own abode; and the Palazzo Antinori, "a masterpiece of honest simplicity," was designed either by him or Baccio d'Agnolo.³ He was also employed by Lorenzo in the erection of the octagonal sacristy at the church of San Lorenzo, but how much of the design is due to him and how much to Antonio Pollaiuolo or Cronaca (both of whom were engaged on the same building), it is difficult to determine.

One of the greatest architects that Italy produced at this time was BRAMANTE (1444-1514), who probably did more to further the return of Italian architecture to classical types than either Brunelleschi or Alberti. None of his *chefs d'œuvre* are in Florence, and unless the Guadagni and Niccolini palaces were designed by him, he left no work in that city.⁴

¹ Benedetto also designed a chapel near Prato, now removed to the inside of Prato Cathedral (Vasari, ii. 247, 8, and v. 137).

² His father was an architect often employed by Cosimo de' Medici. Besides his brother Antonio and his son Francesco (of whom mention will be made later), his two nephews, BASTIANO (1481-1551) and ANTONIO the younger (d. 1546), attained some measure of celebrity as artists. The former was a painter who, though a pupil of Perugino, adopted the style of Michelangelo; the latter was an architect who built S. Maria di Loreto and other buildings in Rome (*Ency. Brit.*, xxi. 265).

³ Anderson's *Italian Renaissance Architecture*, p. 22.

⁴ Fergusson's *History of the Modern Styles of Architecture* (1862), p. 87. Among his chief works may be mentioned the Palazzo della Cancelleria at

SCULPTURE

Although Donatello and Ghiberti were no more, their influence was still felt, and the very high level of excellence to which Florentine sculpture had been raised by them was almost maintained by their successors, notably by Antonio Rossellino, Mino da Fiesole, Luca della Robbia (whose early works have been noticed), and not less so by Verrocchio and Benedetto da Majano.

ANTONIO ROSSELLINO and MINO DA FIESOLE both executed some delicately sculptured bas-reliefs, on the pulpit in Prato Cathedral, which were completed in 1473.¹ There are three undated works in the Bargello, namely, a statue of S. John, a bust of a boy (? S. John), and a bust of Francesco Sassetti, all by Antonio Rossellino. He died in 1478 or 1479.

One or more of the three works of MINO DA FIESOLE in the Badia, which have been mentioned, may have been executed between 1469 and 1473, when he went to Rome, where he resided for many years. The beautiful tabernacle in the Medici chapel in S. Croce belongs to a later date, as it is a *replica* of one in S. Maria in Trastevere at Rome.² Several of his works are in the Bargello, among others, busts of Piero de' Medici (*Il Gottoso*) and his brother Giovanni. Mino returned to Florence and died there on July 11th, 1484.

LUCA DELLA ROBBIA (in conjunction with his nephew Andrea and some of Andrea's sons) continued the manufacture of terracotta ware until his death in 1482. The medallions, outside the Hospital of S. Paolo in Florence, are said to have been begun by Luca and finished by Andrea. Possibly the last circular relief (facing the corner of the Via de' Fossi) is a portrait of Luca by Andrea.³ Between the years 1470 and 1480 some further decorations in the Pazzi chapel at S. Croce were executed

Rome and (perhaps) S. Maria delle Grazie at Milan (Anderson's *Italian Renaissance Architecture*, p. 47). His design for S. Peter's at Rome was much modified by Michelangelo, who nevertheless greatly admired it; but competent judges are of opinion that Bramante's original design would have been more effective than the one that was carried out.

¹ Perkins, i. 207. The reliefs on the Prato pulpit here attributed to Antonio are sometimes attributed to his brother Bernardo (*Ency. Brit.*, xx. 857), but if so, they must have been executed before 1464.

² This is one of the few works in Rome which Perkins admits to be by Mino. Professor Middleton thinks those in S. Maria del Popolo authentic (*Ency. Brit.*, xvi. 478).

³ Burlamacchi's *Luca della Robbia* (1900), p. 9.

by the Robbia firm, and they may be by Luca's own hand, but it is not likely, as during the later years of his life he was very infirm.¹ Seven of the Robbia-ware Madonnas in the Bargello are claimed for Luca in the official catalogue.

ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA (1437-1528) extended the application of Robbia ware to architectural uses, such as friezes, retables, and *lavabi*, in consequence of which the output of the factory was much increased. He is, however, but scantily represented in Florence, as he chiefly worked for churches and convents at a distance. In 1489 he made the fine relief of a Madonna between two angels, which is now over the door of the Archive Room in the Opera del Duomo; and in 1491 he was working at Prato, where some of his best productions are to be seen. One of the most remarkable works, usually ascribed to him, is the series of lovely child-figures outside the Spedale degli Innocenti at Florence.² A Madonna of peculiar beauty, in a subterranean oratory approached through the church of San Gaetano, is attributed to him,³ as are also several reliefs of Madonnas (some of them very lovely) in the Bargello. His only work in marble is an altar in S. Maria delle Grazie near Arezzo.

Fine specimens of work that issued out of the Robbia factory, but which cannot with certainty be ascribed to any particular member of the family, are the Coronation of the Virgin in the Medici chapel at S. Croce, the Annunciation over the door of the chapel of the Spedale degli Innocenti, and a Madonna between SS. James and Dominic in a lunette over the door of the convent of S. Jacopo di Ripoli. There are a large number of works in Robbia ware in the Bargello, but their effectiveness is much diminished by being seen collectively. They are far more attractive when seen in the places for which they were executed.⁴

ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO (1429-1498) was a goldsmith, sculptor, painter, and engraver. The only specimens of his goldsmith's work now existing are bas-reliefs of the Feast of Herod and the

¹ It was on the ground of infirmity that he declined to accept the presidency of the Guild of Artists, to which he had been elected in 1471 (Burlamacchi, pp. 8, 100).

² *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 590. Perkins classes these among works of uncertain authorship (App. 3 to cap. vii. of vol. i.).

³ Cavallucci and Molinier, *Les della Robbia* (1884), p. III.

⁴ A catalogue of all the known works in Robbia ware, that are in churches or public galleries in Europe, is given by the Marchesa Burlamacchi at pp. 107-121 of her *Luca della Robbia*. There are thirty-six specimens of this ware in the South Kensington Museum.

Dance of Herodias' daughter (in the Opera del Duomo), and these show that even at the outset of his career his style was marked by extravagance; and the solitary example of his skill as a niellist is a Pax of the Deposition in the Uffizi. Nor have we more opportunities in Florence of judging of his ability as a sculptor, for the only work there in which he had a hand is the frieze round Andrea Pisano's Baptistery gate. In this he assisted Ghiberti, and a quail, fluttering among thick leaves and thistles, is believed to have been designed and modelled by him.¹

ANDREA VERROCCHIO (1435-1488) was one of the most eminent sculptors of this period, and he was also famous as a goldsmith, painter, and musician. It is said that he was one of Donatello's pupils, but there is little trace of that master's influence to be seen in his work.² In his youth he was apprenticed to a goldsmith, Giuliano Verrocchio, after whom he was called.³ Vasari mentions many of his works in the precious metals, such as cope-buttons, statuettes, and vases ornamented with reliefs, all of which have disappeared, except a silver altar-frontal representing the beheading of S. John the Baptist, which he made for the Baptistery in 1477.⁴ One of his earliest sculptured works was the beautiful marble medallion of the Madonna, which is over the tomb of Leonardo Bruni in S. Croce. In 1472 he completed the monument of Piero and Giovanni de' Medici (father and uncle of Lorenzo) in the church of S. Lorenzo, which consists of a marble sarcophagus decorated with bronze acanthus leaves; and in the same year he made the copper ball and cross, which crown the dome of the cathedral. In 1476 he cast the bronze statue of David which is now in the Bargello. It has none of the classic beauty of Donatello's David, but although it is intensely realistic it is redeemed from the prose of realism by a lifelike simplicity. The stripling who left his few sheep in the wilderness, and faced single-handed the giant from whom an army had fled, has never been more truthfully imagined. It was probably about this time that he modelled and cast for Lorenzo de' Medici's villa at Careggi, the exquisite fountain which now stands in the cortile of the Palazzo Vecchio, "where, like a sunbeam which has found its way into those gloomy precincts, it brightens them by its presence."⁵

¹ Perkins, i. 224.

² *Ibid.*, i. 175.

³ He was the son of Michele di Francesco Cione.

⁴ Vasari, ii. 250.

⁵ Perkins, i. 178.

In 1483 he completed the bronze bas-relief in one of the niches outside Or San Michele, representing the Incredulity of S. Thomas, which he had commenced nearly twenty years before.¹ His bas-relief of Francesca Tornabuoni, now in the Bargello, was intended for a monument to her memory in S. Maria Novella which was never erected.² Verrocchio's masterpiece, which was not completed at his death, is the colossal equestrian statue of the *condottiere* Bartolommeo Colleoni, at Venice, which is one of the finest equestrian statues in the world.

BENEDETTO DA MAJANO was even more distinguished as a sculptor than as an architect. Although his "bas-reliefs are pictures, they approach more nearly to the requirements of sculpture than many of Ghiberti's reliefs, in that the stories are told by as few figures as possible, in which respect, as well as in flatness of surface treatment, they resemble those of Donatello."³ The delicately sculptured framework round the door of the Sala dell' Udienza, in the Palazzo Vecchio, was probably executed about 1471, as well as a statue of S. John the Baptist, a figure of Justice and two *candelabri* with *putti* (all intended for the Palazzo Vecchio), which are now in the Bargello.⁴ His bust of Pietro Mellini (also in the Bargello) was executed in 1474. The shrine of the Madonna dell' Ulivo, near Prato, completed about 1480, is probably the work of the brothers Majano. Benedetto's purity of style may be recognised in the terra-cotta Madonna, while the stiff draperies and exaggerated sentiment in the marble Pietà beneath it recall Pollaiuolo, and may be assigned to Giuliano and Giovanni.⁵ Benedetto's busts of Giotto and the musician Squarcialupo, in the Duomo, seem to have been executed before 1490, and his monument to Filippo Strozzi the elder, in S. Maria Novella, was commenced about that year. The roundel above this tomb is not only Benedetto's masterpiece, but one of the best works of the fifteenth century.⁶ Benedetto went to Naples in 1490 and remained there for three years.

Benedetto's brother GIULIANO DA MAJANO (1432-1492) was also a versatile artist of much celebrity, but none of his achievements as an architect or sculptor exist in Florence, where he is

¹ Richa, i. 20.

² This lady has been variously and mistakenly called Lucrezia, Giovanna, and Selvaggia. It has also been erroneously said that her relief formed part of a monument in S. Maria sopra Minerva at Rome which has been destroyed.

³ Perkins, i. 231.

⁴ Vasari, ii. 242, 247.

⁵ Perkins, i. 227.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 230.

now only known as an *intarsiatore*.¹ Most of his life was spent in Naples, but before going there he executed the peculiarly beautiful *intarsia* work on the stalls of the *Sagrestia delle Messe*, in the Duomo, from designs by Finiguerra and Baldovinetti.²

ANDREA SANSOVINO (1460-1529)³ was one of the most renowned sculptors in Italy, at the moment when Renaissance Sculpture was passing into its decline; indeed the line which divides the sobriety of the fifteenth from the extravagances of the sixteenth century may be traced in his works. Like Giotto, he was a shepherd, and first evinced his talents by roughly sketching on flat stones the sheep which he was tending. After studying sculpture from the collection of antiques, which Lorenzo de' Medici had formed in the gardens of S. Marco, he became a pupil of Pollaiuolo. The style of his early works is restrained, and shows but little of his master's influence.⁴ Between 1488 and 1490 he carved the capitals of some of the pilasters in the sacristy of S. Lorenzo, and made an altar in the Corbinelli chapel in the same church. There are bas-reliefs on this altar of the Coronation of the Virgin, a Pietà, and scenes from the New Testament, which are delicately sculptured, and though they show no individuality, their workmanship is that of an accomplished artist.⁵ In 1491 he went to Portugal, where he remained till the end of the century.

The great Lucchese sculptor, Matteo Civitale, executed in 1484 the bas-relief of Faith now in the Uffizi—his only work to be seen in Florence.

PAINTING

The tendencies already alluded to were still active, and under their combined influence Painting was fast approaching its zenith. The boundary-line, which divided the painters of the period last noticed into two schools, was now becoming obliterated. The chief representative of the Christian Idealists was Perugino, and he (notwithstanding Michelangelo's bitter gibe) had learned many a useful lesson from the Naturalists; while prominent members

¹ Unless he, and not Benedetto, was the architect of the rooms over the Sala dei Dugento, as Cav. Milanese holds (Horner, i. 241).

² Colvin, p. 22. It is also said they were the joint work of Benedetto and Giuliano (Richa, vi. 149).

³ His name was Andrea di Nicolo di Domenico Castrucci, and he was born at Monte San Savino, after which place he was called. His *sobriquet* is occasionally written Sansavino, but more generally Sansovino.

⁴ Perkins, i. 242.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 242.

of the naturalistic school (*e.g.* Cosimo Rosselli, Piero di Cosimo, Baldovinetti) frequently drew their inspirations from Religion. And what is yet more significant, is that the greatest painters of the period—Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, Ghirlandajo, Lorenzo di Credi—cannot properly be classified, for while they were emphatically Idealists they had appropriated all the science and the best of the spirit of the Naturalists.

It was during the lifetime of Lorenzo de' Medici that Painting entered on what has been aptly described as its Golden Age.¹ It had been gradually gaining strength for nearly two centuries; it was now in the vigour of early manhood, and it still retained much of the enthusiasm of youth. The stages of its life may, with some show of accuracy, be assigned to the following centuries:—²

Childhood	1270-1370
Youth	1370-1470
Manhood	1470-1570
Old Age	1570-1670

The year 1270 may be taken as the date of the birth of painting, for it ends the decade in which Cimabue's famous Madonna (whether it is the one in the Rucellai chapel or not) was executed,³ and Duccio di Buoninsegna, Mino, and Ugolino da Siena were about to enter on their careers as artists. Its childhood may be said, not inappropriately, to synchronise with the joint lives of Giotto (1276-1337) and Orcagna (1308?-1368); its growth during youth is marked by the progress made by Masolino (*c.* 1383-1447?), Masaccio (1402-1429), Fra Angelico (1387-1455), and Filippo Lippi (*c.* 1412-1469); while its manhood, commenced with the early works of Botticelli (1447-1510) and Ghirlandajo (1449-1498), was carried to its prime with those of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Raphael (1483-1520), and Michelangelo (1475-1564), and closed with the death of Titian (1477-1576).⁴ Its declining years are represented by Annibale

¹ Symonds, iii. 266.

² It is obviously impossible to place definite chronological limits to stages in what was a continuous growth, and centuries, when approximately correct, are convenient for the purposes of memory.

³ It was completed in 1266.

⁴ The commencement of the decadence would be placed much earlier but for the Venetian School, as Andrea del Sarto, Correggio, Luini, and Lorenzo di Credi were all dead before 1540, and the only first-rate artists working between that date and 1570 were Titian, Tintoretto, and Paolo Veronese.

Carracci (1560-1609), Guido Reni (1574-1642), Domenichino (1581-1641), and Guercino (1590-1666).

The Laurentian era is certainly one of transcendent interest in the history of painting, for with the exception of Correggio and two or three of the Venetian masters, every one of the greatest of the *cinquecento* painters was living.¹ It may be that they had not quite attained the technical perfection which was reached some twenty or thirty years later, but the sinister influences of the naturalistic school are less apparent. "Art for dexterity's sake" was never unpleasantly *en evidence* as a motive, in the works of the greatest of them.² Religious subjects were, for the most part, treated in a reverent spirit and with some of the quaint conventionalism, so charming in its suggestiveness, of earlier days. The tender melancholy grace of some of the Madonnas of Filippino Lippi and Lorenzo di Credi, and the deep devotion of Perugino's saints, recall the spirituality of the Semi-Byzantines, while for expression of intense but restrained feeling, Leonardo's celebrated *Cena* has probably never been surpassed.

SANDRO BOTTICELLI, as Alessandro the son of Mariano Filipepi was called, was born in 1446 or 1447.³ He was first apprenticed to a goldsmith, Botticello (from whom he took his name), and then studied painting under Fra Filippo Lippi.⁴ After 1467 he was for a few years associated with Verrocchio. Thus his style was formed under the influence of Idealists and Naturalists. And, as the form in which his message was conveyed was composite, so was the message itself. For this reason his pictures have a peculiar interest for students of the Renaissance, as they embody, perhaps more than those of any other painter, the conflicting energies that were at work in the intellectual world of his

¹ Namely Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, Perugino, Filippino Lippi, Piero della Francesca, Benozzo Gozzoli, Gian Bellini, Mantegna, Melozzo da Forlì, Pinturicchio, Luini, Lorenzo di Credi, and Francia, who were all painting; Michelangelo, who was studying sculpture; and Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartolommeo, Cima da Conegliano, and Carpaccio, who were children. Twelve of them either belonged to the Florentine school or studied in Florence.

² Except perhaps in the later works of Filippino Lippi. Men possessed of any great power must always take a delight in its exercise, and so we see that the technical skill which Leonardo, Botticelli, and Ghirlandajo had acquired, sometimes influences their choice and treatment of a subject, but the exhibition of this skill is never their primary object, as it is with so many of their successors.

³ Crowe and Cav., ii. 414; Plunkett's *Sandro Botticelli* (1900), p. 5.

⁴ Vasari, ii. 230. It has been said that Botticelli worked as a goldsmith at Prato, and that he derived his name from his brother Antonio, who was nicknamed Botticello (a little cask).

day. He was deeply religious by temperament, and became one of Savonarola's disciples, yet he was of so receptive a nature that he inhaled with joyousness the humanistic atmosphere which surrounded him. He sought his inspirations not only in the Old and New Testament and Dante, but in Boccaccio and Poliziano. Hence we find in his works Christianity and Paganism strangely commingled. It is a mark of true genius that he was able to produce so much harmony out of what was incongruous. But the task which he set himself was not always within his powers, and occasionally an undertone of discord betrays the irreconcilability of the forces with which he was dealing. "He was the only painter in Italy," as Ruskin truly observes,¹ "who understood the thoughts of the Heathens and Christians equally, and could in a measure paint both Aphrodite and Madonna," but his Aphrodites have in them something of the wistfulness of the Mother of Christ, and his Madonnas something of the stateliness of a heathen goddess. Although his works are characteristic of the many-sided age in which he lived, and expressive of external influences, his individuality is manifest in them all. Bible scenes and classical myths are portrayed in a fairy-land of his own creation. It is this, perhaps more than anything else, which makes him one of those artists "who have a distinct faculty of their own by which they convey to us a peculiar quality of pleasure which we cannot get elsewhere."² Probably no painter ever lived who had such a power of depicting graceful action and breezy movement, and few have ever treated flowers, especially roses, with a more loving hand. Lorenzo the Magnificent was fascinated by his genius, and it is not a little remarkable that a follower of Fra Girolamo should have been court painter to the house of Medici.³

A Madonna in the Spedale degli Innocenti, generally attributed to Filippo Lippi, is now said to be one of Botticelli's earliest works,⁴ and Judith, Holophernes, and the Madonna of the

¹ *Fors Clavigera* (1896), i. 428.

² Pater's *Renaissance* (1893), p. 65.

³ Armstrong, p. 409. There is a fine portrait of Giuliano de' Medici (Lorenzo's brother) by Botticelli at Bergamo, and a *replica* or a copy at Berlin. He also painted the portrait of a lady wearing the Medici gem (probably a member of the family) which is at Frankfort, and one of Lorenzo's wife, which is possibly at Berlin. Portraits of other members of the family, which are in Florence, will be mentioned in the text.

⁴ Plunkett's *Sandro Botticelli* (1900), pp. 5, 57. A Madonna in the S. Maria Nuova Gallery, said to be of the school of Filippo Lippi, is sometimes ascribed to Botticelli.

Pomegranate (all in the Uffizi) are also supposed to be productions of his youth.¹ The allegorical figure of Fortitude (also in the Uffizi), and a Madonna and Child adored by SS. Cosmo and Damian (in the *Accademia*), were probably painted before 1475.² The portrait of Giuliano de' Medici's *inamorata*, "La Bella Simonetta," the theme of so many verses, unless posthumous, must have been painted before 1476.³ The Assumption (now in the National Gallery, London), which was painted for Matteo Palmieri, must have been completed before his death, which occurred about 1478.⁴ In that year Botticelli, at the command of the Signory, painted the effigies of the Pazzi conspirators outside the Palazzo Vecchio. The S. Augustine in the Ognissanti,⁵ (in the execution of which he is said to have endeavoured to surpass Ghirlandajo's S. Jerome, which had recently been painted in the same church) and the Coronation of the Virgin in the *Accademia*⁶ were both painted about the year 1480. If any of the engravings in the Landino Dante are after the illustrations on the MS. Dante at Berlin⁷ (which is extremely doubtful), such illustrations must have been executed before 1481.

The picture in the Uffizi, known as *La Primavera*, is said to have been the last work which Botticelli painted before going to Rome, in or about 1482. It is one of his most celebrated and also one of his most characteristic works. It is, however, an allegory of which no universally accepted explanation has as yet been offered. According to tradition, as its name implies, it

¹ Crowe and Cav., ii. 416. Morelli discredits the ascription of the Madonna of the Pomegranate to Botticelli (*Italian Painters*, p. 84). A S. Sebastian at Berlin is said to have been painted by Botticelli in 1473.

² Plunkett's *Sandro Botticelli*, p. 7. Morelli (pp. 84, 85) refuses to credit Botticelli with either of these works. Mr. Berenson (p. 107) rejects the first, but accepts the second.

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle (vol. ii. p. 424) think this picture a genuine Botticelli, but doubt if it is a portrait of Simonetta. Richter, Morelli, and Berenson refuse to ascribe it to Botticelli, but Richter attributes to him a portrait of Simonetta, usually said to be by the Pollaiuoli, which was in the collection of the late Duc d'Aumale at Chantilly (Vasari, vi. p. 131).

⁴ Botticelli incurred the displeasure of the Church for having painted this picture which, it was alleged, embodied Origen's heresy (held by Matteo Palmieri) of the "neutral angels," i.e. that angels, who had held aloof from the combat between the Almighty and Lucifer, were now human beings.

⁵ Plunkett's *Sandro Botticelli*, p. 12.

⁶ This picture has been variously assigned to 1480 and 1500, and its genuineness questioned (*Ibid.*, pp. 13, 62, 63).

⁷ This Dante was once in the Hamilton collection. There are some illustrations of Dante by Botticelli in the Vatican.

signifies "The Coming of Spring," and was suggested by some lines from Lucretius on the Seasons.¹ It has more recently been conjectured that it was intended to illustrate Poliziano's *Giostra*, or again (and perhaps with more reason) that it and the *Giostra* were inspired by the same motive, namely the death of *La Bella Simonetta*. It has been interpreted as symbolising "The Reign of Venus," "The awakening of a soul to new life," and "The Dawning of the Spirit of the Renaissance."² Possibly more than one of these interpretations is correct, and the picture contains, as it were, an allegory within an allegory. It may be that Botticelli intended, by representing the soul of Simonetta entering into new life, to suggest the appearance of the Spirit that was fast making the old order give place to new. This no doubt sounds fanciful to modern ears, but it is not inconsistent with the mind of the Renaissance or the imagination of the artist.

The picture of Pallas leading a vanquished Centaur, which is in the private apartments of the Pitti Palace, if, as was probably the case, it was painted to celebrate Lorenzo de' Medici's triumphant return from Naples in 1480, must have been executed about that year.³

In or about the year 1482 Botticelli was in Rome, whither he had been summoned by Pope Sixtus IV. to assist in decorating the Sistine Chapel.⁴ In 1484 he was back in Florence, and in 1487 he painted four panels in the Casa Pucci, illustrating Boccaccio's story of Nastagio degli Onesti.⁵ It is thought that the portrait, called in the Uffizi catalogue "Piero de' Medici" (Lorenzo's son), was executed in 1492.⁶

When the Adoration of the Magi (in the Uffizi), which Burck-

¹ Symonds, iii. 251.

² *Arch. Stor. d. A.* (1897), pp. 321-340, where an interesting monograph on this picture will be found.

³ This work, mentioned by Vasari, was for long supposed to have been lost, but it was discovered in the Pitti Palace about 1896. Its *motif* is the triumph of Peace and Order over War and Anarchy.

⁴ His frescoes in the Sistine Chapel are of Scenes from the Life of Moses, the Destruction of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the Temptation of Christ.

⁵ Vasari, ii. 233. It is said that they are now in some private English collection (*Ency. Brit.*, iv. 165).

⁶ Plunkett's *Sandro Botticelli*, p. 9. It is apparently this picture which is said by Mr. Berenson (p. 107) to be a portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici's uncle, Giovanni, of whom little is known beyond the grief, which his death at the age of twenty-two, occasioned his father, Cosimo. Two frescoes of members of the Tornabuoni family, which Botticelli painted in 1486, are now in Paris.

hardt considers Botticelli's best composition,¹ was painted, seems uncertain. It was executed for the church of S. Maria Novella in honour of Cosimo de' Medici, which leads to the supposition that it was an early work, but this cannot be the case if, as some critics suppose, it shows traces of Savonarola's influence.² It has an historical interest, as it contains portraits of Cosimo (who kisses the foot of the infant Christ), of Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano de' Medici, as well as of Botticelli himself.³

The beautiful picture of the Birth of Venus was probably painted before 1492, but some years after the *Primavera*.⁴ Botticelli's strange power, of combining and harmonising things new and old, was never more successfully exercised. The work, in its conception and accessories, is unmistakably a product of the Italian Renaissance, and yet it gives us "a more direct inlet into the Greek temper than the works of the Greeks themselves even of the finest period."⁵ It displays, too, another of Botticelli's marked characteristics, for the sadness which pervades so many of his faces finds expression here, even in the goddess of Love. Among other works in Florence, to which no date can be assigned, a Madonna and six Saints in the *Accademia*, is one of the most important. The three Archangels and Tobit in the same collection, which is officially ascribed to Botticelli, is by modern critics variously attributed to Pollaiuolo, Verrocchio, and Botticini.⁶

Botticelli was a mosaicist as well as a painter, and he was engaged with Ghirlandajo on the mosaics in S. Zenobio's chapel in the Duomo, which, owing to the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, were never finished. There is also good reason to believe that he was an engraver both on wood and metal, but as to his proficiency in these crafts there is little or no evidence. Vasari writes of him that on his return from Rome, "being whimsical and eccentric (*sofistico*), he occupied himself with commenting on a certain part of Dante, illustrating the *Inferno* and executing prints (*figurò lo inferno e lo mise in stampa*) over which he wasted much time and, neglecting his proper occupation, he did no work, and thereby caused infinite disorder to his affairs. He likewise engraved many of the designs which he had executed, but in a

¹ The *Cicerone*, p. 63. ² Plunkett's *Sandro Botticelli*, p. 25.

³ It also contains portraits of Filippo Strozzi and Poliziano.

⁴ *Arch. Stor. d. A.* (1897), p. 322.

⁵ Pater's *Renaissance* (1893), p. 62.

⁶ By Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Bode, and Berenson.

very inferior manner, the work being badly cut."¹ On the strength of this assertion it has been assumed that the copper-plate illustrations in a Dante with a commentary by Landino, printed in 1481, were both drawn and engraved by Botticelli. It is difficult to see a trace of Botticelli's taste or skill in these mediocre productions. There is, however, no doubt that he executed a series of drawings illustrating certain cantos of the *Inferno*, some of which are in the Berlin Museum and some in the Vatican; and Herr Lippmann, the Director of the Print Room at Berlin, thinks that the prints in the Landino Dante are "reduced copies or rather brief transcripts" of these drawings by an indifferent artist.² But there are grounds for believing that the Berlin and Vatican illustrations were not executed till some years after the appearance of the Landino Dante, and if so, it is possible that Botticelli made studies for them at an earlier date, which were copied on metal plates, either by himself when a mere tyro in the art, or by some other unskilled engraver, and which have disappeared—an hypothesis which is consistent with Herr Lippmann's view, and with the tradition that Botticelli had a hand in illustrating the 1481 Dante.³ This is, however, mere conjecture. There is a print of Bacchus and Ariadne, executed shortly before 1480, which, if it were safe to decide such matters by manner and feeling, might certainly be attributed to Botticelli.

FILIPPINO LIPPI (1457-1504), the son of Fra Filippo Lippi,⁴ was Botticelli's most eminent pupil. His style has so much in common with that of his father and his master, that the works of the three men are sometimes confounded. In one respect he was superior to Botticelli for, although he had not Botticelli's exuberance of fancy, his type of beauty was more spiritual. He belongs to that small group of Raphael's immediate predecessors who, while they had attained great technical skill, did not look upon their craft as an end in itself, but regarded it as the medium for expressing thought and feeling—a chosen few who were the masters and not the servants of science—whose wings had not been clipped by Anatomy or Perspective, and who occasionally soared into the realm which Giotto and Fra Angelico had made their home. In his later years, however, Filippino now and

¹ Vasari, ii. 235. Vasari adds that Botticelli's best print was of Savonarola's "Triumph of Faith." Nothing is known of this print.

² Lippmann, p. 20.

³ Colvin, p. 41.

⁴ Cook's *Handbook to the National Gallery* (1893), p. 630, note 1.

again succumbed to the influence of the new school, and we find in some of his works a foreshadowing of the faults of the post-Raphaelites. The attitudes of his figures become more strained, they gesticulate more violently, and his backgrounds are surcharged with Roman antiquities.¹ But even then, the sweetness of his faces and dignity of his compositions, redeems what would otherwise be displeasing.² One of his earliest works, the Vision of S. Bernard, painted in 1480 by order of Francesco del Pugliese for the La Campora outside the walls, is now in the Badia, where it was removed for safety in 1529, when Florence was besieged.³ Although executed at the commencement of his career, it must be ranked among his *chefs d'œuvre*, and it holds almost as high a place among the sacred, as Botticelli's Birth of Venus holds among the mythological, pictures of the Laurentian era. The reputation which he had earned, when only twenty-five years of age, may be gathered from the fact that work in connection with the decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio, which Perugino had been invited to perform but was unable to undertake, was entrusted to Filippino. Possibly the Madonna and Saints, now in the Uffizi, which was painted in 1485, and was once in the Sala degli Otto of the Palazzo, formed a part of the commission.⁴

Between 1482 and 1490 he completed the famous frescoes in the Brancacci chapel,⁵ and his work there is "a worthy and harmonious continuation" of that of Masaccio.⁶ He has introduced into the fresco of SS. Peter and Paul, restoring a dead youth to life, many interesting portraits, among others his own and those of Tommaso Soderini, Luigi Pulci, and Antonio Pollaiuolo; and in another fresco, a portrait of Botticelli.⁷ Another striking work, executed about this time, was the altarpiece in the Nerli chapel in S. Spirito. It represents the Madonna with SS. Martin, Nicholas, and Catherine, and it contains fine portraits of the donor, Tanai de' Nerli, and his wife. It is not only one of Filippino's masterpieces, but one of the finest pictures in Florence.⁸

From 1489 to 1493 Filippino was in Rome, painting (with the aid of his pupil Raffaellino del Garbo) frescoes for Cardinal

¹ Symonds, iii. 249; Vasari, ii. 274.

² Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1888), ii. 213.

³ Crowe and Cav., ii. 439.

⁴ *Ibid.*, ii. 440.

⁵ *Ibid.*, ii. 439.

⁶ *The Cicerone* (1879), p. 64.

⁷ Vasari, ii. 275.

⁸ Crowe and Cav., ii. 440.

Caraffa in S. Maria sopra Minerva,¹ and on his way thither he erected a monument at Spoleto to his father at Lorenzo de' Medici's expense.²

Of his undated works in Florence a Madonna in the Corsini Gallery, and the History of Esther (painted on the sides of a chest) in the Torrigiani Gallery, are in his early style.³ His genius for devising spectacles and masks was unrivalled and, as he was always ready to aid in such matters, he became very popular with the Florentine youth.⁴

DOMENICO GHIRLANDAJO (1449-1494), like Botticelli, was a typical painter of the Laurentian era, but in a narrower sense.⁵ Botticelli was the best exponent, as far as his art would allow, of its mind; Ghirlandajo, as far as his art was concerned, of its knowledge. If we want to gain an insight into the intellectual life of the Renaissance, we turn to Botticelli; if we want to measure its artistic skill, we turn to Ghirlandajo. Not one of his contemporaries, excepting Leonardo da Vinci, had a more powerful brain or a more cunning hand.⁶ In correctness of drawing, in knowledge of perspective, of composition, of anatomy, of chiaro-oscuro, he was almost without a rival. Truthfulness and sobriety of judgment are always manifest in his productions, yet somehow they rarely evoke enthusiastic admiration. The homage we pay him is intellectual rather than emotional.

Like many eminent Florentine painters, Ghirlandajo began life as a goldsmith. When he abandoned the craft is not certain, but he did not distinguish himself as a painter until he was past thirty years of age.⁷ His earliest works, as far as is known, were executed in 1480. These are the frescoes in the Vespucci Chapel of the Ognissanti, which have an additional interest as they contain

¹ These frescoes display a deterioration in style (Symonds, iii. 249).

² Vasari, ii. 278. ³ Crowe and Cav., ii. 449. ⁴ Vasari, ii. 283.

⁵ His name was Domenico di Tommaso Curradi di Doffa Bigordi. He was probably called Ghirlandajo (a garland maker) because he made chaplets of gold and silver for Florentine ladies. It may be, however, that it was his father who had thus obtained this *sobriquet*, and that he inherited it, but it is not certain whether his father was a goldsmith or a broker (Vasari, ii. 201, note; vi. 124).

⁶ Michelangelo was but eighteen years old at Ghirlandajo's death.

⁷ His master in the art of Painting was Alesso Baldovinetti. The influence of his earlier craft seems visible in many of his pictures, but how far this was the case is a moot point. "Ghirlandajo was to the end of his life a mere goldsmith," says Ruskin (*Mornings in Florence*, p. 26), while Mr. Armstrong sees "little trace of the goldsmith in his works" (*Lorenzo de' Medici*, p. 430). See also Crowe and Cav., ii. 462.

the portrait of Amerigo Vespucci, who accompanied Columbus on one of his voyages of discovery, and from whom America takes its name.¹ In the same year he painted a S. Jerome, also in the Ognissanti, and a very striking fresco of the Last Supper in the adjoining refectory.² After completing the Apotheosis of S. Zenobio in the Sala del Orologio of the Palazzo Vecchio, in 1482, he went to Rome at the command of Pope Sixtus IV., where he painted the Calling of SS. Peter and Andrew in the Sistine Chapel. On leaving Rome (probably in 1484) he stayed at San Gimignano on his way home, and there executed some of his most attractive works. These are the frescoes of the Vision and Burial of S. Fina, in the church of *La Collegiata*, in which there is a depth of pathos and a truth of sentiment that lifts them above the level of his ordinary achievements.

In 1485 he finished the fresco of the Roman Warriors in the Palazzo Vecchio which he began in 1481,³ and in the same year he painted the frescoes in the Sassetti Chapel in S. Trinità. They represent episodes in the Life of S. Francis, and are among the very finest of Ghirlandajo's works that are to be seen in Florence. The one representing the restoration to life of a child of the Sassetti family, who had been killed by falling from a window, contains a view of the Ponte Trinità and the Palazzo Spini, and portraits of Maso degli Albizzi, Agnolo Acciaiuoli, and Palla Strozzi.⁴ In the one of the Confirmation of the Franciscan Order by Pope Honorius, is a portrait of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and those of the donor Francesco Sassetti and his wife are painted on each side of the altar. The beautiful easel picture of the Adoration of the Shepherds, which is now in the *Accademia*, was painted at the same time as an altar-piece for this chapel. The Madonna is here of a more ideal type of beauty than is usual with Ghirlandajo, and the far distance in the background is exceptionally lovely.

Ghirlandajo had hardly completed the decoration of the Sassetti Chapel, before he was commissioned by the Tornabuoni family to paint the frescoes which adorn the choir of S. Maria Novella.⁵

¹ These frescoes were whitewashed in 1616, and only disclosed to view at the very end of the nineteenth century.

² Crowe and Cav., ii. 464. ³ Berenson, p. 117. ⁴ Vasari, ii. 203.

⁵ This choir was formerly the chapel of the Ricci family, and it had been adorned, at their expense, with frescoes by Orcagna which had fallen into decay. Giovanni Tornabuoni obtained the permission of the Ricci for Ghirlandajo to paint his frescoes over those of Orcagna, by a subterfuge (Vasari, ii. 207-208). A description of these frescoes will be found in Lafenestre, pp. 165-169, and Crowe and Cav., ii. 477-486.

In this grand series we see Ghirlandajo's power of decorating a vast space, and his complete mastery over the laws of composition, better than elsewhere.¹ "The most striking thing here is not any remarkable dramatic motive, but the dignified, loftily impressive, picture of life which we know to be the glorification of the actual life of Florence."² These frescoes were finished in 1490.³ During their progress he executed two altar-pieces of the Adoration of the Magi, one in 1487 and the other in 1488. The former is now in the Uffizi,⁴ and the latter (which contains the artist's own portrait) is in the church of the Innocenti. A Madonna with SS. Zenobio and Giusto and the archangels Michael and Raphael (to which no date has been assigned) is a grand picture, and must have been painted during his best period. It was executed for the church of S. Giusto, and is now in the Sala di Lorenzo Monaco at the Uffizi. There is an almost equally fine undated picture of the Madonna with SS. Dominico, Thomas Aquinas, Clement and Denis in the *Accademia*. His fresco of the Last Supper, in the small refectory of San Marco, is a later work than that of the same subject in the Ognissanti, and not so pleasing. He has left no picture in existence bearing a later date than 1491.

Ghirlandajo was also a mosaicist of much ability, as is evidenced by the Annunciation in the lunette under Jacopo della Quercia's bas-relief on the north wall of the Duomo.⁵ The date of his death is uncertain, but it was certainly before 1498 and probably about 1494.⁶

VERROCCHIO (1435-1488), whose eminence as a sculptor has

¹ There, also, are his powers of portraiture to be seen at their best. On each side of the window are portraits of the donor Giovanni Tornabuoni and his wife, and in the Expulsion of Joachim from the Temple are those of Baldovinetti, Ghirlandajo and his brother David, Marsilio Ficino, Cristoforo Landino, Demetrius Chalcondylas, and Poliziano (Vasari, ii. 209-212). The names of the members of the Tornabuoni family, whose portraits are here, are given in Padre Della Valle's edition of Vasari (Siena, 1791-1794).

² *The Cicerone*, p. 67. Ruskin (*Mornings in Florence*, pp. 25-29) contrasts Ghirlandajo's "Birth of the Virgin" with Giotto's treatment of the same subject, very much to the disadvantage of the former. Everyone must admit Giotto's superiority in imaginative power, but has not Ruskin's admiration of Giotto blinded him to Ghirlandajo's merits?

³ In their execution Ghirlandajo was aided by numerous assistants (Crowe and Cav., ii. 479).

⁴ There is a replica in the Pitti.

⁵ He was commissioned with other artists by Lorenzo de' Medici to execute some mosaics in the chapel of S. Zenobio in the Duomo which were never completed (Crowe and Cav., ii. 490).

⁶ *The Cicerone*, p. 67; Crowe and Cav., ii. 490. The Visitation in the Louvre is dated 1491 (Vasari, vi. 123).

been noticed, was also a painter of much ability. He is, however, celebrated rather as a teacher of Leonardo da Vinci and Lorenzo di Credi than from his own pictures, for very few exist which can with certainty be attributed to him. He so impressed his style on his two famous pupils that the works of the three men cannot always be readily distinguished.¹ He was a pupil of Baldovinetti, and he appears to have been influenced by the Pollaiuoli, from whom he imbibed what Vasari calls "the modern manner." He had, however, more artistic feeling than his teachers, and though he was a realist, his realism is tempered by idealism. His handiwork as a painter is indisputably to be found in only one picture which has come down to us. This is the Baptism of Christ, now in the *Accademia*, which was completed in 1472, and even it is not all his own, for one of the kneeling angels was painted by Leonardo da Vinci. Vasari's story that Verrocchio, on seeing how superior in execution Leonardo's angel was to the rest of the picture, abandoned painting, is certainly untrue.² It is obvious from this work that Verrocchio aided the forward movement that was taking place in painting on its scientific and technical sides. With the exception of the two angels, however, the picture is not attractive, and judged by it we should not be able to credit Verrocchio with that fine sense of beauty which we know from the fountain in the *cortile* of the Palazzo Vecchio that he possessed. Only one other picture in Florence is officially claimed for him, namely a Madonna and Saints in the Uffizi.³ The two kneeling figures in the foreground (SS. Francis and Nicholas of Bari) have a tendency to attitudinise which recalls Perugino. No date can be assigned to this work, but it seems, from what Vasari says, that Verrocchio did not take up painting till he had made his reputation as a sculptor, so it may be assumed that it was executed after 1469.

LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519) belonged by birth⁴ and training to the Florentine school of painting, but most of his life was spent out of Tuscany, and his name is not unfrequently associated with the Milanese school, of which he was the founder. He was the first of that brilliant group of painters

¹ Crowe and Cav., ii. 402. Perugino was also a pupil of Verrocchio, but his style was not influenced by his master to the same extent as that of his two fellow-pupils.

² Vasari, ii. 255; *Ency. Brit.*, xiv. 456.

³ Messrs. Morelli and Berenson question the authenticity of this work.

⁴ He was born at Vinci, a village near Empoli. He was the illegitimate son of a Florentine notary and a contadina.

through whom the spirit of the Renaissance, when in the fulness of its power, found expression. Had he been an artist alone his name would have been immortal, but his title to fame rests on many another ground. His genius was well-nigh universal. And when his physical and moral as well as his intellectual qualities are taken into account, we find in him an approach to ideal manhood such as has seldom, if ever, been equalled. His face was radiantly beautiful, and his strength was that of a giant. His manners were so gracious, and he was so goodly to look upon, that his mere presence brought gladness to the hearts of the sad; and he could compel acquiescence with his views by the magic of his speech.¹ His mind was equally at home in the realms of speculative philosophy, physical science, or applied mathematics. Humboldt says that "he was the first to start on the road towards the point where all impressions of our senses converge in the idea of the Unity of Nature."² He was one of the greatest military and civil engineers of his day, and he attained some eminence as a poet, a critic, a musician, and an improvisatore. Of every subject to which he turned his attention he made himself absolute master, and in the case of many of them, he added to the store of human knowledge.³ Indeed, in originality and invention, he was so far in advance of his age that his contemporaries could not appreciate the importance of the results of his researches, which were forgotten, and the "discoveries which he made wholesale were left to be rediscovered piecemeal by men of narrower genius who came after him."⁴ The artistic, the inventive, and the reasoning faculties have never been so highly developed in the same individual before or since. But for our knowledge of his powers as an artist we have, alas! to trust mainly to his sketch-books and to the writings of contemporaries, for almost all his great works have perished.⁵

¹ Vasari, ii. 390.

² Richter's edition of the *Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci* (1883), vol. i. p. xix.

³ He founded the study of anatomy and revived that of hydraulics. He classified plants according to their structure, and investigated the construction of the eye and the laws of optics. He anticipated the discoveries of later geometers, and went far towards discovering the laws of gravitation, the rotation of the earth, the molecular composition of water, and the undulatory theories of Light and Heat. He invented a saw which is still in use in the Carrara marble quarries (article by Sidney Colvin, *Ency. Brit.*, xiv. 461).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 462. He designed conical bullets, breech-loading guns, and described how ships could be propelled by steam.

⁵ Ruskin characteristically observes: "Because Leonardo made models of machines, dug canals, built fortifications, and dissipated half his art-power in

He studied painting (and probably sculpture) under Verrocchio, whom he aided, as has been mentioned, in the execution of the picture of the Baptism of Christ.¹ His apprenticeship ended about 1477, and he worked on in Florence under the patronage of Lorenzo de' Medici for the next six or seven years. His unfinished panel of the Adoration of the Magi (now in the Uffizi) belongs to this period.² The exact date of his departure from Florence is uncertain, but it must have been between 1480 and 1487. Little is known of his movements between these dates, but it is probable that in 1483 and 1484 he was travelling in the East. We find him in the service of Lodovico il Moro at Milan in 1487, and he continued to reside there for the next twelve years.

PIETRO PERUGINO (1446-1524) was neither a Florentine by birth³ nor a member of the Florentine school, but he must not be left unmentioned, for he passed many years of his life in Florence, where nearly twenty of his works are to be seen. His first master of eminence was Piero della Francesca, under whom he studied at Arezzo. In 1479 he came to Florence, and for the next three years he was pupil or assistant of Verrocchio. There his Umbrian manner was modified, but it never succumbed to the influence of the Naturalists. There is not, in the whole field of Art, a better example of a harmonious resultant of two opposite forces than is to be found in the works of Perugino. In Florence he learned "the accurate delineation of every leaf on the trees and every flower in the field,"⁴ and made himself a more thorough master of aerial perspective than even his great pupil Raphael. The endless perspicuity that he was able to impart to his pictures is one of their most characteristic charms. There is more movement in them than in the *sacre conversazione* of his fellow-countrymen, but convulsive action was as much an offence to him as was its absence in his works an offence to Michelangelo.⁵ His creations are resting-places of contempla-

capricious ingenuities, we have many anecdotes of him, but no picture of importance on canvas, and only a few withered stains of one upon a wall" (*Queen of the Air*, 1883, p. 188).

¹ This work was painted when Leonardo was about twenty years old.

² The genuineness of this work is admitted by Morelli, but questioned in the *Arch. Stor. d. A.* (1892). Another unfinished panel (a S. Jerome) executed about this time is in the Vatican.

³ He was born at Citta del Pieve, in Umbria. His name was Vannucci, and he was called Perugino after the capital of his native state.

⁴ Ruskin.

⁵ Michelangelo described Perugino's art as "rude" (*goffo*), "the most cruel, the most false, and the most foolish insult ever offered by one great man to another" (Ruskin's *Ariadne Florentina*, 1876, p. 40). For this speech Perugino unwisely brought an action for libel against Michelangelo.

tion "tenanted by saintly and seraphic beings," pervaded by a quietude of holiness almost as intense as any conceived by Fra Angelico, and shaped with a skill and knowledge that the Friar possessed not.¹ Such effects Perugino often produced by artifices, graceful enough in themselves, but too apparent and sometimes monotonous. One gets a little tired of the sideways turn of the saintly head and the gentle upward kick of the angelic heel. These mannerisms became more accentuated in his later life, and were distasteful to the Florentines. Nevertheless, "in his best work the Renaissance set the seal of absolute perfection upon pietistic art."²

In 1482 he received a commission for a mural painting in the Palazzo Vecchio, which for some reason or other was revoked. In 1484 he was in Rome painting in the Sistine Chapel,³ and in 1486 he was back in Florence. In 1489 he painted an altar-piece for S. Domenico at Fiesole (which has disappeared), and in 1491 he served on a board appointed to judge designs for a façade for the Duomo.⁴ In the following year he painted another altar-piece for S. Domenico, which is now in the Uffizi. This fine work shows improvement in drawing and composition.⁵ The portrait of Francesco dell' Opera (in the Uffizi) was probably painted in 1491.⁶

LORENZO DI CREDI (1457-1537) was called after Maestro Credi, a goldsmith, to whom he was apprenticed in his youth.⁷ He studied painting under Verrocchio, and his style was influenced not only by his master but by Leonardo da Vinci and Perugino, who were his fellow-pupils. Under these influences he became a correct draughtsman, a master of perspective and of the use of oil paints. He rarely, if ever, painted in tempera or fresco, and his pictures are for the most part small and highly finished. With the exception of a Venus in the Uffizi all of his works are of sacred subjects. His sense of beauty was more delicate than that of Leonardo, and his sentiment less affected than that of Perugino, but in vigour he was inferior to both. His Madonnas, of which he painted many, are often characterised

¹ Symonds, iii. 294.

² *Ibid.*, 295.

³ The fresco of the Giving of the Keys to S. Peter is his.

⁴ No design was selected.

⁵ Crowe and Cav., iii. 191.

⁶ Morelli (p. 101) attributes to Perugino the portrait of Alessandro Braccisi in the Uffizi, which was ascribed to Lorenzo di Credi, and thinks it was painted between 1485 and 1490.

⁷ Crowe and Cav., iii. 404, 411. His real name was Lorenzo Sciarpelloni. Vasari gives the dates of his birth and death as 1449 and 1530 respectively.

by a melancholy but very winning grace. It is impossible to assign even approximate dates to most of his works. We know, however, that the Nativity in the *Accademia*, which is one of his finest, is also one of his earliest productions.¹ One of his two beautiful Annunciations in the Uffizi is also said to be an early work.² Eight other pictures in the Uffizi, an Adoration of the Shepherds in the *Accademia*, and a Holy Family in the Pitti are attributed to him.³ In the church of San Domenico,⁴ half-way between Florence and Fiesole, there is a splendid altar-piece by him representing the Baptism of Christ, which is one of his *chef d'œuvre*.⁵

Verrocchio must have entertained a high opinion of Lorenzo's general artistic capacity, as on his death-bed, in 1488, he petitioned the Venetian Signory to entrust the completion of his unfinished model of the equestrian statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni to Lorenzo.⁶

ANTONIO POLLAIUOLO (1433-1498) and his brother PIERO POLLAIUOLO (1443-? 1489)⁷ were artists who belong distinctly to the naturalistic branch of the Florentine school. Both were goldsmiths, sculptors, and painters, and Antonio was also an engraver. As a goldsmith Antonio is said to have surpassed all his contemporaries, and to have equalled Finiguerra as a worker in niello.⁸ Most of his work in gold and silver has disappeared, but there is a *pax* in the Uffizi attributed to him, and some of the reliefs on the dossale in the Baptistery may also be his. Copies of a fine medal representing the murder of Giuliano de' Medici are in the Uffizi.⁹

¹ It was painted for the convent of S. Chiara (Vasari, iii. 146; Lanzi's *History of Painting*, 1828, i. 159).

² Berenson, p. 114. It is now No. 1160. The other is No. 1314.

³ Morelli disputes the authenticity of the Madonna (No. 1287) in the Uffizi, and of the Holy Family in the Pitti, and Mr. Berenson disputes that of Nos. 1163, 1168, 1217, and 1294 in the Uffizi. Crowe and Cavalcaselle (vol. iii. p. 411) attribute a S. Bartholomew, on a pilaster in Or San Michele, to Lorenzo di Credi.

⁴ It was placed here in 1786, when a Madonna by Perugino was removed to the Uffizi (Vasari, iii. 147 note).

⁵ A Madonna between two saints in the Cathedral at Pistoja is said to be his *chef d'œuvre* (*The Cicerone*, p. 70).

⁶ The petition was not granted, and the model was finished by Leopardi (Perkins, i. 181).

⁷ Their father was a goldsmith, their grandfather a poulterer (*pollaiuolo*). It must have been the father and not Antonio who assisted Ghiberti with his Baptistery gates.

⁸ Vasari, p. 222.

⁹ His most important work, as a sculptor, is the tomb of Sixtus IV. at Rome.

The Pollaiuoli worked together as painters, and it is not always possible to distinguish the work of the one from that of the other. The style of both was prejudiced by their training as goldsmiths, but this is more marked in the works of Antonio than of Piero.¹ They continued the experiments in media and improved on the methods introduced by the Peselli and Baldovinetti, but they cannot be credited with having overcome the difficulties attending the use of oil. They were probably the first artists who used the dissecting knife to gain a knowledge of anatomy. For this Antonio has been anathematised by Ruskin,² and it must be admitted that he represents the very worst side of early Renaissance Art. He was a man of great artistic power, but he was regardless of beauty; he chose subjects in which his anatomical knowledge could be shown off to advantage, and he delighted in portraying strife, bloodshed, and pain. This is apparent in his pictures of Hercules and the Hydra, in the Death of Antæus in the Uffizi, and in his print of a Battle between Naked Men.³ His training as a goldsmith shows itself in his picture of Prudence in the Uffizi, and in his S. Sebastian in the Pitti.⁴

The manner of PIERO, who may have been a pupil of Andrea del Castagno, was more pictorial than that of his brother. The only works that can with certainty be ascribed to him are two portraits in the Uffizi, one of Galeazzo-Maria Sforza and the other of someone unknown. The SS. Eustace, James, and Vincent, in the Uffizi, may also be his.⁵

COSIMO ROSSELLI (1439-1507) was a pupil of Neri di Bicci, and subsequently, perhaps, of Benozzo Gozzoli.⁶ Although selected by Sixtus IV. to assist in decorating the Sistine Chapel (? before 1476),⁷ he cannot be ranked with his contemporaries who were employed on the same work.⁸ His fresco of Beato Filippo receiving the dress of the Servites from the Virgin, in the *cortile* of the church of the Annunziata at Florence, was probably

¹ Crowe and Cav., ii. 324, 389, 395. ² *Ariadne Florentina*, p. 254.

³ And also in his S. Sebastian in the National Gallery, London. The Hercules and Antæus are probably replicas of panels painted for the Casa Medici (Lafenestre, p. 31). The print of the Battle of Naked Men has been much eulogised for its approach to Michelangelo's manner (Lanzi's *History of Painting*, 1828, vol. i. p. 136); but it foreshadows even more distinctly the faults of Michelangelo's successors.

⁴ Crowe and Cav., ii. 391.

⁵ Lafenestre, p. 19. ⁶ Crowe and Cav., ii. 520. ⁷ *Ibid.*, 523.

⁸ Perugino, Botticelli, Pinturicchio, Dom. Ghirlandajo, and Luca Signorelli.

painted in 1476,¹ and that of the removal of a miraculous chalice in the church of S. Ambrogio in the same city, in 1486.² There is also an Assumption by him in the latter church, painted in 1498. Two Madonnas with Saints are in the church of S. Spirito, one of which was painted by him in 1482. There is an undated S. Barbara of his in the *Accademia*. Some of his other works are in the Uffizi and S. Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi.³

PIERO DI COSIMO (1462-1521) was a pupil of Cosimo Rosselli.⁴ He was an exponent of the eccentric side of Renaissance Art. His works are a curious compound of realism and fancy.⁵ There is something akin to Botticelli in his romantic treatment of mythological subjects, but the extravagance of his imagination was not restrained by any sense of beauty. He was fond of introducing into his pictures fantastic landscapes, strange animals, gaudy flowers, and abnormal productions of Nature. He emulated, though not very successfully, the high finish which Lorenzo di Credi gave to his oil-paintings.⁶

BALDOVINETTI continued to work in Florence, and about 1471 he painted a Trinity, which is now in the *Accademia*.⁷ He was also a mosaicist. In 1481 he repaired the mosaics over the portal of the church of S. Miniato, and in 1482-1483 those over the door of the Baptistery that faces the Florentine Duomo. He died in 1499.

Only one of the masters of second rank who were working at this time requires notice, and that is Ghirlandajo's best pupil, SEBASTIANO MAINARDI (d. about 1513?), who painted frescoes in the Baroncelli Chapel in S. Croce and three Saints in the Uffizi.⁸

¹ Richa, viii. 108.

² The date of this work has been variously given as 1456, 1476, and 1486, but the last is probably correct (Lafenestre, p. 222).

³ Mr. Berenson attributes to him two Madonnas, one in the gallery of S. Maria Nuova and the other in the Palazzo Corsini.

⁴ His name was Pietro di Lorenzo. An amusing account of his eccentric habits is given by Vasari, vol. ii. pp. 412-425.

⁵ Symonds, iii. 256, 257.

⁶ Crowe and Cav., iii. 423.

⁷ Lafenestre, p. 203. Mr. Berenson says that he painted frescoes on the ceiling of the choir in S. Trinità between 1472 and 1497 (*Florentine Painters*, p. 103).

⁸ Mr. Berenson credits him with frescoes in the Bargello chapel and a Madonna in the Torrigiano Palace. His most important works are at San Gimignano.

If Mr. Berenson's surmises are correct FRANCESCO BOTTICINI (1446-1498), a pupil of Neri di Bicci, should also be mentioned. Mr. B. attributes to

COPPER-PLATE ENGRAVING

Some two hundred and fifty Florentine engravings of subjects from Sacred History and Mythology are extant; but in almost all cases their authorship is problematical and their exact date uncertain.¹ Many of these prints have been conjecturally ascribed to Botticelli and one Baccio Baldini, either as their joint or independent work. Of Baldini very little is known, and his very existence has been recently questioned.² Vasari casually mentions him in his life of Marcantonio Raimondo. "Maso Finiguerra," he says, "was followed by the Florentine goldsmith Baccio Baldini, who had no great power of design, for which reason all that he did was with the invention and design of Sandro Botticelli."³ It is on the strength of this statement, coupled with the passage from Vasari (already quoted)⁴ in which he says that Botticelli had neglected painting for engraving, that most of these ascriptions have been made, and although perhaps correct they should, like many of Vasari's uncorroborated statements, be received with caution.⁵

Two important and interesting sets of prints, which probably appeared between 1464 and 1481, and which have been given to Botticelli and Baldini,⁶ are those of Twenty-four Prophets and Twelve Sibyls, but Mr. Sidney Colvin, Keeper of the Prints in the British Museum, thinks that they were designed and engraved by pupils of Pollaiuolo, and instead of Botticelli having had any hand in their production that their influence may be seen in his *Fortezza*.⁷ To the same period, though with less certainty, may be assigned a collection of twenty-four plates known as the "Otto Prints," which have been variously attributed to Baldini and Finiguerra.⁸ There are others (e.g. Hercules combating the Giants, Hercules and Antæus, and the Battle of Centaurs) which are certainly the

him some thirty pictures, of which twelve are in Florence, but none of his attributions of the Florentine works have received official recognition, nor is Botticini even mentioned by Vasari, Lafenestre, Burckhardt, Morelli, or Crowe and Cavalcaselle.

¹ *Ency. Brit.*, iv. 166.

² Colvin, p. 34.

³ Vasari, iii. 485.

⁴ See *ante*, p. 406.

⁵ It is hardly surprising that they should have been made, seeing that designs of some partake of Botticelli's manner and Baccio Baldini is almost the only engraver whose name has come down to us.

⁶ Ottley's *History of Engraving*, i. 396-402, where they are described.

⁷ Colvin, p. 41, note.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 36; Ottley, i. 343, 352. It has been doubted whether these prints are not trial impressions from niello covers of jewel boxes.

work of members of the Pollaiuolo school; and they are so similar in style to the Battle of Naked Men, which is an undoubted Antonio Pollaiuolo, that it is not improbable that they were executed by him.¹ A series of fifteen plates of the Life of the Madonna, on the other hand, apparently issued from the rival school, as they show the influence of Filippo Lippi and his pupils.²

The first book illustrated with copper-plate engravings produced in Florence was the *Monte Santo di Dio*, which appeared in 1477.³ It contained only three plates which have, without authority, been ascribed to Baldini. The next illustrated work of importance was the celebrated Landino Dante (already noticed under "Botticelli") which was published in 1481. It was intended that this book should contain one hundred plates—one for each canto of the *Inferno*—but only the first twenty cantos were illustrated.⁴ The plates are of inferior workmanship, and set out of line with the text. This was the last production of the kind issued by the Florentine printing-presses for many years. The mechanical difficulties of printing type and metal-plate engravings on the same page were too great for the early printers, in consequence of which woodcuts were henceforth used for purposes of illustration.⁵

WOOD-ENGRAVING

It is impossible to trace the progress made in the art of Wood-Engraving in Florence (which, as has been stated, originated before 1430) as no print bearing an earlier date than 1490 is in existence. As the best specimens appeared between that date and 1508, they will all be noticed in a subsequent chapter.

PRINTING

Printing was first introduced into Florence by Bernardo Cennini (an eminent goldsmith and one of Ghiberti's assistants) who established a press there in 1471. The first book which

¹ Ottley, i. 446. Fifty prints for a game of cards, known as "Il Giuoco di Tarocchi," are described by Ottley (vol. i. pp. 383-398) and thought by him to be Florentine, but it is more probable that they are Venetian or Paduan.

² Colvin, p. 36.

³ Lippmann, p. 19.

⁴ Most copies of this work have less than twenty illustrations, but one of the British Museum copies has that number.

⁵ Lippmann, p. 21.

he printed was an edition of Virgil, with a commentary by Servius, which appeared in 1472. A more productive press was that founded shortly afterwards by Domenico da Pistoja, at the convent of S. Jacopo di Ripoli, at which, according to one authority, fifty, and according to another, one hundred, books were printed before 1484.¹ The most celebrated books printed in Florence before 1500 were perhaps the *Monte Santo di Dio* (1477) and the illustrated Dante (1481) which have been already mentioned. A Homer was printed there in 1488, and also five other Greek books before the end of the fifteenth century.²

Florence was, however, behind some other Italian cities in the use which she made of the new invention.³ Printing had been introduced into Italy six years before Cennini started his press, and while before the commencement of the sixteenth century 2,835 books had been printed in Venice, 925 in Rome, and 629 in Milan, only 300 had been printed in Florence.⁴ No doubt the Florentines were loath to allow the exquisite handiwork of their accomplished scribes and miniaturists to be superseded by mere mechanical reproductions, and though they may have been dull not to grasp more quickly the overwhelming import of the new process, it is hard not to feel a lurking sympathy with them in their desire to save from extinction an art which had produced illuminated manuscripts such as those in the Laurentian Library and the convent of S. Marco.⁵ Florence, however, realised the duty of encouraging local talent better than any other Italian city, for nowhere else did the writings of so many native authors make their first appearance in print.⁶

¹ Gordon Duff's *Early Printed Books* (1893), p. 74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 75.

³ The tardiness of England as compared with Italy in this matter is remarkable. By the end of the fifteenth century there were printing-presses in seventy-one Italian and in but two English towns (Horne's *Study of Bibliography*, 1814, vol. i. pp. 163-175).

⁴ The first Italian printing-press was established at Subiaco by Sweynheym and Pannartz in 1465. The 300 works here mentioned do not include any of Savonarola's undated tracts, some of which were certainly printed before 1500. Panzer's *Annales Typographici* (1793), pp. 404-436.

⁵ Federigo, Duke of Urbino, who was one of the greatest book-collectors of his day, would not have a printed work upon his shelves (Gregorovius's *History of Rome in the Middle Ages*, 1900, vol. vi. p. 558).

⁶ Works of Poliziano, Lorenzo de' Medici, Luigi Pulci, and Savonarola were printed in Florence.

LITERATURE

The literature of the Laurentian era was not of such surpassing merit as its painting or its sculpture, nevertheless it shows a marked improvement, both in quality and quantity, on that of the preceding half-century. The stagnation which set in after the death of Boccaccio was ended, and though the revival brought forth nothing of world-wide repute—no *Divina Commedia*, no Sonnets to Laura, no *Decamerone*—its productions hold a permanent place in Italian Literature. Their characteristics were distinctly those of mid-Renaissance Art. The writers of this period strove first after perfection of form and elegance of diction, and their poetical works display finish rather than fire, vitalised, however, by no little originality. One inestimable benefit they conferred on their nation. They put an end to the pedantic preference of the humanists for the use of the Latin tongue. In this movement Florence took the lead, and by none of her sons was it more effectually advanced, both by precept and example, than by LORENZO DE' MEDICI.¹ He repudiated with vigour the suggestion that there was any "unworthiness or incapacity" in the Italian language, or that it could not be fittingly employed for the treatment of high themes, and his writings go far to show the truth of his contention.² His poems range over a wide field. He wrote love sonnets and pastorals, lewd songs and hymns, a low comedy and a sacred play. His *Sonetti*, *Canzoni*, and *Selve d'Amore* (poems of his youth) were mostly inspired by his romantic but unimpassioned love for Lucrezia Donati. His *Ambra* was prompted by his delight in country life. *La Caccia col Falcone* is a description of a Tuscan hawking party. *La Nencia da Barberino*—"a masterpiece of true genius and humour"³—deals with peasant life, and *I Beoni* is, in form at least, a burlesque imitation of the *Divina Commedia*. *S. Giovanni e Paolo* is a miracle-play which he wrote for the amusement of his children. Muratori's estimate of his poetry is that "it is gold from the mine, mixed with mere earth, yet always gold."⁴ Nevertheless it is impossible to read Pico della Mirandola's opinion that Lorenzo's poems are comparable to Dante's or Petrarch's without a smile.⁵ He had a great command of language, an ear for rhythm, and exquisite skill in composition, but

¹ Symonds, ii. 394.² *Ibid.*, iv. 236.³ *Ibid.*, iv. 381.⁴ Roscoe, i. 277 note (a).⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 310.

there was nothing of the *sacer vates* in the man. Like Pope, he had all the qualities which would have enabled him to give adequate embodiment in verse to the spirit of his age, and had letters, and not statecraft, been the serious business of his life, his poems would probably have held much the same place in Italian literature as those of Pope do in our own.¹

No one gave Lorenzo more substantial aid, in his efforts to promote the use of the vernacular among authors, than the great scholar ANGELO POLIZIANO (1454-1494).² The aid was, however, somewhat unwillingly accorded, for the bent of his genius seems to have been toward classical literature. Before he was eighteen, the excellence of his translation of some of the *Iliad* into Latin verse, had earned him the title of *Homericus juvenis*; and before he was thirty, his professional lectures on the humanities at Florence were attracting students from all parts of Europe. He wrote numerous works in Latin verse which, for fertility of conception and mastery of metre, have never been surpassed by any modern writer.³ It was for his brilliant scholarship that he was chiefly esteemed by his contemporaries, but fortunately for his future reputation, under the influence of Lorenzo de' Medici, he turned his attention to his mother tongue, and he became the greatest Italian poet of his day. His works are praiseworthy more through perfection of style than originality of thought. They are historically valuable as, through the effect they had on the popular poetry of Italy, they paved the way for Ariosto.⁴ His chief works in Italian are *La Giostra* (called also *Le Stanze*), which has already been mentioned; the *Orfeo*,⁵ and songs and love ditties (*Ballate* and *Rispetti*).

MARSILIO FICINO (1433-1499) completed his translation of Plato into Latin (the work for which he had been specially trained) in 1482. He then proceeded to translate Plotinus and many other Alexandrian writers. Besides these he translated Dante's *De Monarchiâ* into Italian, he wrote a life of Plato and numerous essays on ethical subjects. But the work which was esteemed most highly by his contemporaries, and earned him a reputation as a philosopher, was his *Theologia Platonica*. It would now be

¹ Leslie Stephen (*Dict. Nat. Biog.*, xlv. 123).

² His family name was Ambrogini, and he was called Poliziano from Montepulciano where he was born.

³ Symonds, ii. 451.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 400, 402; Garnett, p. 119.

⁵ It is a lyrical drama, a translation of which will be found in Symonds' *Sketches and Studies in Italy* (1879), pp. 227-240.

quite useless did it not illustrate the intellectual methods of the Renaissance, and supply us with a sample of arguments which were then deemed convincing. It is a fantastic compound of Religion, Philosophy, and Astrology, intended to prove the identity of Platonism with Christianity—a thesis which its author supports by a vast store of erudition and much puerile reasoning.¹ Intellectually Ficino was a typical child of his age, in its strength and in its weakness. Morally he was superior to most of his fellow-workers, for “a more amiable and a more harmless man never lived.”² Historically he is interesting as having been the teacher of Lorenzo de’ Medici and the moving spirit of the Platonic Academy. He came under the spell of Savonarola’s influence, but after the Friar’s death he was carried away by the wave of reactionary feeling that set in, and vilified his memory.

LUIGI PULCI (1432–1487) was a kind of court poet to the Medici, and was another of the group of Florentine writers who aided Lorenzo in restoring the Italian language to its proper place in literature. *Il Morgante Maggiore*—his *chef d’œuvre*—is more thoroughly Tuscan in character than any work of importance that had preceded it.³ It is also the first great example of burlesque poetry, and its influence extended beyond the Alps.⁴ It is a romantic epic, founded on popular legends, and it was written at the request of Lorenzo’s mother for recitation in the Medicis’ family circle.⁵ It reflects, perhaps more clearly than any other single poem, the many-sided character and incongruous elements of Renaissance thought. It is a veritable *mélange* of serious reflection and irreverent buffoonery, of theology, philosophy, and magic.⁶ Some of the stanzas are as genuinely religious as Savonarola’s *laudi* and others as openly licentious as Lorenzo’s *Canti Carnascialeschi*. But the poem has a secondary literary value, for in tracing the connection of its story with historical fact through the transforming media of mediæval romances, a process of development is revealed by which it may well be that the great Homeric epics came into being.⁷

Luigi’s brother LUCA PULCI wrote the prosaic but historically valuable poem in celebration of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s tournament, which has been noticed.

¹ Villari’s *Savonarola*, i. 61–67.

² *Ency. Brit.*, ix. 139 (A. J. Symonds).

³ Symonds, iv. 430.

⁴ For example, in Byron’s *Beppo* and *Vision of Judgment*. It has been surmised that the characters of Iago and Othello were suggested to Shakespeare by personages in the *Morgante* (Garnett, p. 129).

⁵ Symonds, iv. 442.

⁶ Garnett, p. 128.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

Giovanni Pico, Count Mirandola, better known as PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA (1463-1494), was not a prolific author, but he was the most prominent and interesting figure in the brilliant band of *literati* who surrounded Lorenzo de' Medici. He surpassed them all in the beauty of his person, in the universality of his knowledge, and in the nobility of his aspirations. He knew Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Arabic. He was well versed in philosophy, and the occult sciences had a peculiar charm for him.¹ So wide was the range of his attainments that he was called the phoenix of his age. But unlike so many of his learned contemporaries, he had a soul above mere stylistic excellence, and he preferred the writings of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and the schoolmen to many of the classics. "To trick out wisdom with ornament," he wrote to a friend, "may be more of a crime than to show it in uncultured rudeness."² He came to Florence in 1484, and for a brief space he lived for amusement and became the idol of Florentine society. Fortune tempted him to lead a life of gaiety—he was noble, rich, and singularly attractive, but the bent of his mind was serious and he soon abandoned pleasure for study.³ About this time he burned five books of Latin verses which he had written, because they were of an amorous character.⁴ Like Ficino, Pico set himself to harmonise Platonism and Christianity, but he approached the task in a more philosophical spirit. He had conceived the idea of the unity of all knowledge, and he endeavoured to extract truth from every system.⁵ It was not sufficient for him to find evidence in favour of Christ's religion in the writings of Plato, but he turned for the same purpose to the works of Arabic philosophers and the Kabbalah. In support of his views he prepared, in 1486, nine hundred theses which he offered to maintain at a public disputation in Rome.⁶ The proposal, however,

¹ Except astrology, which he ridiculed.

² Symonds, ii. 334.

³ We hear of one amatory escapade with the wife of a member of the Medici family at Arezzo, which got him into trouble and occasioned him some remorse. With this exception his life seems to have been exemplary (Reumont, ii. 86).

⁴ Most of his Italian poetry has also perished. Judging from the few specimens which survive it must, Crescembini thinks, have been of a high order of merit (Roscoe, ii. 86).

⁵ Symonds, ii. 333. "If the Counter-Reformation had not checked the further growth of Italian science, the spirit that lived in Pico would certainly have produced a school of philosophy second to none that Europe has brought forth" (*Ibid.*, p. 337).

⁶ One of these theses was that "No science yields greater proof of the divinity of Christ than magic and the Kabbalah" (*Ency. Brit.*, xiii. 813). It was by Pico that Reuchlin was led to study the Kabbalah.

was ill received, the book containing the theses was condemned as heretical, and its author remained under the ban of the Church for seven years. He was much dejected by this ecclesiastical censure, for he was a sincere Catholic at heart. In 1491 he published the *Heptaplus*, a mystical exposition of the book of Genesis. He next planned a great work, in seven sections, in support of orthodox Christianity, but only the section directed against astrology was completed. Pico's character shines forth perhaps more clearly in his "Oration on the Dignity of Man" than in any of his works. It breathes a spirit of true Christianity rationalised by a noble paganism, in a style distinctive of the Renaissance at its best.¹ He died in Florence on November 17th, 1494, the very day on which Charles VIII. entered the city. Most of the later years of his life were spent either at Florence or Fiesole, during which time he earned the esteem and affection of Lorenzo de' Medici, who made strenuous efforts to obtain the removal of the papal ban. Before his death Pico had distributed most of his wealth among the poor, and it is said that he intended to join the preaching friars.

CRISTOFORO LANDINO's most important contribution to Italian literature was his commentary on the *Divina Commedia*, which formed part of the first edition of that work which was printed in Florence.² It appeared in 1481, nine editions of the *Commedia* having been previously printed elsewhere. The text of Landino's edition is not trustworthy, but the commentary still retains some little value.³ He seems to have had a preference for Latin, although his commentary on Dante and his lectures on Petrarch did much to bring Italian poetry into repute.⁴ His *Disputationum Camaldulensium*, written in Latin, has a value for those who are interested in the intellectual life of the Laurentian era. It purports to narrate some academical discussions which took place between Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, Alberti, Ficino, Donato Acciaiuoli, and others, near the convent at Camaldoli. It is probably an account of actual conversations presented in a literary form, and "it supplies a fair sample of the topics on which social conversation turned among refined and cultivated men."⁵ It was first printed about 1475. Scholarship seems to have had more attractions for Landino than

¹ Symonds, ii. 48. ² The first edition was printed at Foligno in 1472.

³ Reumont, ii. 39. ⁴ Symonds, iv. 237.

⁵ Symonds, ii. 340; Reumont, ii. 34. The substance of some of these discussions is given in both of the works referred to.

philosophy, but his translations and glosses on the classics have lost their value. He died in 1504.

VESPASIANO DA BISTICCI (1421-1498)¹ was closely connected with the group of Florentine humanists whose quarrels embittered the literary world of their day, but he held aloof from their squabbles, and his work is of a more solid and healthy character than theirs. He is an interesting figure to bibliophiles, as he was the last of the master-copyists and the first of the modern booksellers. At the moment of the introduction of printing into Florence he was the largest employer of professional scribes in Europe, and his great knowledge enabled him to thoroughly supervise their work and ensure its accuracy.² Cosimo de' Medici, Pope Nicholas V., and the Duke of Urbino, all sought his advice and assistance when forming their libraries. His reputation as an author rests on his *Lives of Illustrious Men*, which is a work of great merit, written in a style that possesses a simplicity more precious than elegance.³ He was personally acquainted with those about whom he wrote, and his judgment of their characters is singularly charitable. His memoir of the Duke of Urbino is one of the most charming literary portraits extant.⁴ Among the other eminent men whose lives he wrote are Popes Eugenius IV. and Nicholas V., King Alfonso of Naples, S. Bernardino, Niccolò de' Niccoli, Carlo Marsuppini, and Gianozzo Manetti.

GIROLAMO BENEVIENI (1452-1542), a pupil of Ficino, was a poet of some power. He was an ardent disciple of Savonarola, and he wrote some of the *laudi* chanted by the children who, at the instance of the Friar, paraded the streets of Florence. Some of these are of beauty and simplicity, but others are more hysterical than modern revivalist hymns.⁵ Following a practice that found favour in his day he versified a novel.⁶ His style was often obscure.⁷ He wrote a spirited remonstrance to Pope Clement VII. for having caused the Florentines so much suffering at the siege of their city in 1529.⁸

¹ He has been previously alluded to in Chapter XVI.

² Symonds, ii. 304-307. He greatly prized the beauty of the MSS. produced under his eye, and had, at first, a contempt for the art by which they were ultimately superseded.

⁴ Symonds, i. 159, note.

³ Muratori, cited by Dennistoun, ii. 113.

⁵ *Ibid.*, iv. 303, 304.

⁶ *Ibid.*, iv. 250. The novel was called *Tancredi*. The *Decamerone* had been versified by Brugiantino in 1554.

⁷ Garnett, p. 121.

⁸ Passerini's edition of *Marietta de' Ricci*, ii. 715.

CHAPTER XX

1492-1494

PIERO DE' MEDICI—CHARLES VIII. IN FLORENCE

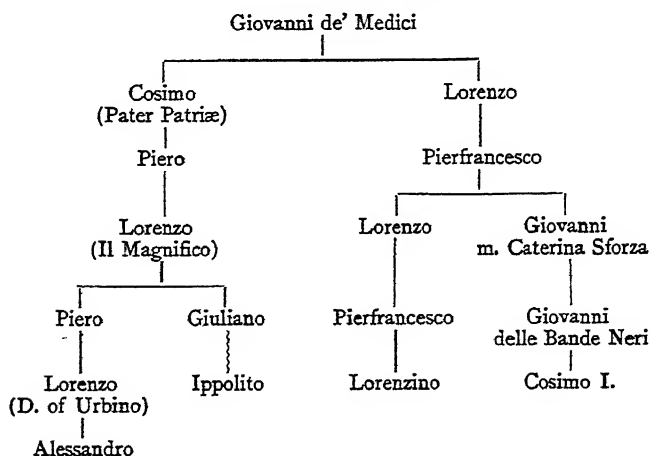
A GLOOM spread over the whole of Italy when Lorenzo de' Medici died, for it was felt that the keystone of the arch on which the peace of the peninsula rested had been removed. Had his life been prolonged, the calamities which were about to befall his country would probably have been postponed, but they would not have been averted, for the coming foreign enslavement was occasioned by a national debility, the progress of which it was altogether beyond his power to stay. Florence, however, does not seem to have realised the change which, through the death of Lorenzo, was in store for her, or to have appreciated the difference between him and his son. Just as Lorenzo, when only a lad of twenty-one, had been called upon by his fellow-citizens to be their untitled sovereign, so Piero at the same age was now called upon to fill the same position. Possibly the Medicean supremacy, which had been in existence for three generations, was regarded as almost hereditary. But the qualities necessary to play the difficult part assigned to him were in Piero conspicuous by their absence. Physically he was well favoured. He was tall, strong, and handsome. He was inordinately fond of field sports. Few wrestlers could compete with him without a fall, and he was one of the best *pallone* players in Italy. But he was neither interested in nor capable of conducting public affairs, which he left in the hands of his chancellor, Piero Dovizzi da Bibbiena. He had none of the Medicean suavity or prudence. He interfered arbitrarily with the liberties of his fellow-citizens, as if it were a matter of right, and without his father's tact. Ignoring his father's counsel, "Remember that you are nothing but a Florentine citizen as I am," he bore himself like a prince.¹

¹ Roscoe, ii. 273.

This arrogance the Florentines ascribed to his being the child of a Roman mother and the husband of a Roman wife, and it made him very unpopular. Although he had been a pupil of Poliziano and surrounded by artists from his childhood, neither Literature nor Art had much attraction for him, and he preferred the society of grooms and athletes to that of cultivated men.¹ In a word, he forsook all the methods which had been characteristic of the Medicean rule, and which had been the secret of the Medicean success.

One of the first mistakes which he made was to imprison two of his cousins, Giovanni and Lorenzo (grandsons of Cosimo's brother Lorenzo), on account of a quarrel with one of them about a lady, and he was with difficulty restrained from putting them to death.²

MEDICI PEDIGREE. (TABLE III.)



Another mistake, trifling in itself, but which led to more serious consequences, was made by him on the death of Innocent VIII. The Pope died on July 26th, 1492, and the leading States of

¹ He was, however, kind to Michelangelo, whom he made an inmate of his house. It is said that the two members of his household whom he held in most esteem were a handsome Spanish groom, who was a great runner, and Michelangelo.

² There had been a long-standing jealousy between these two branches of the Medici family, which Lorenzo had tried to allay by betrothing his daughter Luigia to the Giovanni whom Piero now imprisoned, but Luigia died before the marriage took place, and it was rumoured that she had been poisoned by her brother Piero, to whom the match was repugnant (Litta, *Medici Pedigree*, Tav. XII.).

Italy, in accordance with custom, sent embassies to congratulate his successor, Alexander VI.,¹ on his election. Piero refused a proposal by Lodovico il Moro that Naples, Milan, and Florence should, on this occasion, be represented by one ambassador, and contrived that the *cortège* of the Florentine representative should surpass in splendour that of the Milanese emissary. It is said that Lodovico took umbrage at this, and Guicciardini actually dates the ruin of Italy from this incident.² In a sense it may be true—not that the astute Lodovico would have allowed his policy to be influenced by such a trifle, but because the incident revealed to him Piero's character. Lodovico's position was at this time a critical one. During the minority of his nephew, Gian-Galeazzo Sforza, he had ruled Milan as regent. In 1490 his nephew came of age, but Lodovico refused to relinquish the reins of government, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Ferrante, King of Naples, whose granddaughter Gian-Galeazzo had married.³ Ferrante determined to resort to force, and Lodovico found himself threatened by the allied forces of Naples and Florence. The position which he had usurped was now in peril, for though he had been promised assistance by Venice and the Pope, he could not depend upon his allies. He therefore turned in his extremity to Charles VIII., King of France, and urged him to revive the old Angevin claim to the crown of Naples.⁴ Charles was persuaded to do so without difficulty, for he "was young, a fledgling from the nest; provided neither with money nor with good sense; weak, wilful, and surrounded by foolish counsellors."⁵ Moreover, the invasion of Italy appealed to the French imagination. Statesmen, scholars, and soldiers pictured to themselves the rich harvest that it would yield.⁶

The news of Charles's intended expedition did not cause as much consternation in Italy as might have been expected. Venice declared her determination to remain neutral, and the attitude of the Pope (intent only on creating principalities for his sons) was dubious.⁷ King Ferrante, against whom the attack

¹ Rodrigo Borgia of infamous memory.

² *Opere Inedite*, iii. 38.

³ Gian-Galeazzo was a dissolute youth, feeble in mind and body, who, but for his wife, Isabella of Aragon, would have acquiesced in his uncle's supremacy.

⁴ René of Anjou, who died in 1480, had bequeathed to the King of France his pretensions to the throne of Naples.

⁵ De Coennes, cited in Symonds, i. 494.

⁶ Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 197.

⁷ Alexander VI. owed his election to the papacy to Lodovico's brother, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, and was consequently drawn towards Milan, but the safety of his dominions pointed to a Neapolitan alliance.

was mainly directed, was naturally alarmed, and he obtained promises of assistance from Florence, Bologna, and some of the minor States of Romagna. But the gravity of the situation was not grasped, for Italy was devoid of national feeling.

Although Florence had thrown in her lot with the King of Naples, her adherence to him was but half-hearted. Her traditional sympathies were Angevin, and it was only Medicean influence, already on the wane, which made her support the house of Aragon. And her disinclination to oppose the King of France was augmented by Savonarola's increasing influence. The King of Naples died on January 25th, 1494, and so Savonarola's prediction in 1491 of the death of Lorenzo, Innocent VIII., and Ferrante was apparently fulfilled. He was in consequence now regarded as a prophet, and his disciples, who were drawn from all classes, even from the supporters of the house of Medici, were daily becoming more numerous.¹ He was now preaching the advent of a new Cyrus who was to march through Italy without breaking a lance and scourge her for her sins.² When, therefore, Charles VIII. crossed the Alps in September, 1494, his coming was regarded by Savonarola's disciples as a fulfilment of yet another of his prophecies, and was hailed by them with joy.

It was not till the French army was actually on Italian soil that alarm became general, and even then Italy only half awoke to the danger. Lodovico seems to have regretted the rash step that he had taken in invoking foreign aid, but it was now too late to draw back, for he had lost the friendship of Alexander VI., who, fearing for the safety of his own dominions, had entered into a close alliance with the King of Naples. Alfonso II., who had succeeded his father Ferrante, made an attempt to oppose Charles's advance, but his troops were defeated at Rapallo. Charles was detained by illness at Turin, and he did not reach Piacenza till October. While he was there Gian-Galeazzo died, and it was commonly reported that he had been poisoned by Lodovico. The rumour lacks corroboration,³ but it was believed at the time, and it increased a coolness which had sprung up between the French and the Milanese.⁴ Lodovico had, however,

¹ Poliziano and Pico della Mirandola succumbed to Savonarola's influence.

² Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 187.

³ Julia Cartwright's *Beatrice d'Este* (1889), pp. 246-248.

⁴ Sismondi, cited in Trollope, iv. 32.

now less need of his foreign allies, as immediately after his nephew's death he had been proclaimed Duke of Milan.¹

Before marching southwards Charles sent ambassadors to Florence demanding a free passage for his army through Florentine territory. The undisguised French sympathies of many influential citizens made Piero waver, but he finally decided to stand by his ally, the King of Naples, and the demand was refused. Thereupon Charles expelled from Lyons all Florentines who were connected with the Medici bank. This clever move, which was prompted by Lodovico, rendered Piero's position still more precarious, as it indicated that the king was hostile to the Medici and not to Florence. And Piero's want of seriousness increased his unpopularity. After the French army had entered Florentine territory he was seen playing *pallone* in the public streets.² The king's route lay by Sarzana, Sarzanello, and Pietrasanta—strong fortresses which were garrisoned by Florentines—and if these had been properly defended, his way would have been barred. A check to the French army would have ruined its prestige, and the elements of a strong opposition would have rapidly gathered.³ But reinforcements were not sent in time, and Sarzana was captured. Piero was seized with panic, and without consulting the Signory he resolved to intercede in person with the King of France. It is probable that he was impelled to take this step by the recollection of the brilliant success which attended his father's journey to Naples after the Pazzi conspiracy.⁴ There was, perhaps, some little similarity between the circumstances under which these two journeys were taken, but Piero was too vain and obtuse to realise the all-important difference between himself and his father. Accompanied by a few friends, he rode to the French camp, and he found Sarzanello gallantly holding out against the besieging forces. His courage now entirely deserted him, he fell on his knees before the King of France and asked pardon for having opposed him. The king required from him the cession of Sarzana, Sarzanello, Pietrasanta, Ripafratta, Pisa, and Leghorn, which were to be held by the French until Naples had been captured, and also a loan of 200,000 ducats. To these preposterous conditions, much to the astonishment of the king and his advisers, Piero at once assented. He returned

¹ Gian-Galeazzo left an infant son, but his claims were ignored by the Milanese.

² Guicciardini, p. 107.

³ Creighton, iv. 214.

⁴ Guicciardini, p. 107.

to Florence on November 8th, 1494, believing that the news he was bringing would gratify his fellow-citizens. But during his absence a change had taken place in the political situation. On November 4th a special meeting of the *Settanta* had been held, at which five ambassadors—Pandolfo Rucellai, Giovanni Cavalcanti, Piero Capponi, Tanai de' Nerli, and Savonarola—had been appointed to treat with the King of France. From the proceedings at this meeting it was evident that Piero had entirely forfeited the confidence of those who had been his father's warmest supporters. Piero Capponi did not hesitate to say that Piero de' Medici was no longer fit to rule the State, and that the time had come to have done with a government of children and to recover liberty.¹ When the humiliating terms which Piero had arranged became known, the indignation throughout the city was general. His report to the Signory was listened to in silence, and when, on November 9th, he rode to the palace at the head of an armed troop, he was refused admission at the public entrance, and informed that he would only be allowed to enter, alone and unarmed, through a side door.² He knew well what this meant, and that the chances were, if he so entered, he would never leave the palace alive. Shortly after the Signory and the Councils declared him a rebel and an outlaw, the people were summoned to the Piazza by the ringing of the great bell, and a crowd armed with old weapons filled the streets. Piero retreated amid the groans and insults of an angry mob to his house. His brother Giovanni displayed more courage and, at the head of a band of followers, endeavoured to enlist the support of the populace by shouting "*Palle ! Palle !*" But Piero's haughty bearing and reckless folly had deprived those words of their magic, and the cries of the Medicean band were drowned by counter cries of "*Popolo e Libertà !*"³ When Giovanni returned to the Casa Medici, he found that his brother had gone. At the head of a handful of soldiers Piero had fled through the Porta San Gallo towards Bologna, and thence he made his way to Venice, where an asylum was afforded him. Giovanni remained a few days in Florence, disguised as a monk, and after collecting some of the

¹ *Arch. Stor.*, Ser. 2, vol. iv., pt. 2, p. 30.

² He was probably aware that the Signory were hostile to him, and it has been said that, acting on his wife's advice, he intended to seize the lordship of Florence by a *coup d'état*, but had not the resolution to effect his purpose.

³ Landucci, p. 74. The effect of these cries was now the reverse of what it had been after the Pazzi conspiracy.

most valuable of the Medicean possessions and placing them in the convent of S. Marco, he effected his escape and joined Piero at Venice. The Signory offered a reward of 2,000 *lire* to any one who would bring them Piero's head.¹

After Piero's departure there was some rioting, and a mob, headed by Francesco Valori, sacked the Casa Medici² and burned the houses of two of Piero's ministers.³ The Pazzi, Neroni, and other exiles (among whom were Piero's cousins Giovanni and Lorenzo) were recalled. On the same day that Piero left Florence Charles VIII. entered Pisa, and in response to the earnest entreaties of her citizens he declared their city free from the Florentine yoke.⁴ Florence, making a virtue of necessity, forthwith acquiesced in the declaration. All the ambassadors, excepting Savonarola, who had been appointed to endeavour to treat with the King of France, repaired to Pisa, but the only answer that Charles would vouchsafe them was, "Once in the great city all shall be arranged." Subsequently Savonarola entered the king's presence, and reminding him that he was an instrument in the hand of the Lord for the reformation of the Church, declared that if he did not respect the city of Florence, or failed in the task which he had been sent to perform, he would be chastised with terrible scourges, and that this message was delivered "in the name of the Lord." It is said that the king was so terrified by these words that he showed more consideration to Florence than he had intended.⁵

The consternation in Florence was great when, on November 11th, Charles arrived at Signa, and much difference of opinion prevailed as to whether or not the city gates should be thrown open to him.

In spite of their French sympathies the citizens were indignant at his occupation of Sarzana and the neighbouring fortresses, and at the loss of Pisa, and were alarmed at a rumour that he intended to restore Piero de' Medici. Hence they were uncertain

¹ Landucci, p. 76. But see Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 224, note 2. Rewards of 4,000 florins for the head of Piero and 2,000 for that of Giovanni were subsequently offered (*Ibid.*, ii. 19).

² It is said that they sacked it from roof to cellar, but seeing that the King of France helped himself liberally to treasures which he found there this is impossible.

³ Antonio del Nero and Agnolo Niccolini. ⁴ Gino Capponi, iii. 13.

⁵ Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 227. Guicciardini (p. 115) thinks that Charles had intended to sack Florence.

whether to regard him as a friend or a foe. After lengthy negotiations it was finally arranged that the king should be admitted, and on November 17th, 1494, he and his army entered the city amid much ceremony. A hustings hung with tapestry was erected outside the gate of San Frediano, whereon sat the Signory, and from which a long Latin oration would have been read had not the rain prevented it.

The French army, about 12,000 strong, first entered, under arms. The artillery, which was drawn by horses (not as in Italy by oxen), and the cavalry, which was composed of the flower of French chivalry with a good sprinkling of Scottish cavaliers, especially impressed the Florentines. "Last of all came the king in complete armour, in the guise of a triumphant conqueror, a spectacle in itself very grand, but for which the spectators had small liking, by reason of the dread and terror which filled their minds."¹ Their terror was, however, tempered with hope, for Savonarola had taught the people to regard the king as the *Flagellum Dei* who was to execute judgment on all evil-doers and purge Italy of wickedness in high places.

If the Florentines were impressed with the sight of the French army, the French were no less impressed with what they saw in Florence. They were astonished at the massive grandeur of the palaces, the beauty of the public buildings, and the splendour and refinement of life, which they confessed were superior to their own.

Four commissioners² were appointed by the Signory to endeavour to come to terms with the king. But the ideas of the two parties respecting their relative positions were poles asunder, and much wrangling ensued. It is probable that no agreement would have been arrived at but for two incidents which occurred after the king's entry, and which opened his eyes to the somewhat dangerous situation in which he was placed. A report had been spread that Piero de' Medici had returned, whereupon the bell of the Palazzo Vecchio was rung, and immediately the shops were shut, barricades were thrown up, and the streets were swarming with armed citizens. This was the king's first experience of a city which had been constructed with a view to street warfare. On another occasion the king's Swiss guard, on hearing some

¹ Guicciardini, p. 117.

² Domenico Bonsi, Guidantonio Vespucci, Francesco Valori, and Piero Capponi.

groundless rumour, attempted to force their way from the Porta al Prato where they were quartered, down the Borg' Ognissanti, and the inhabitants, not understanding their object, assailed them with a shower of missiles from the windows and roofs and forced them to go back. These proceedings disabused the king's mind of the idea that he was absolute master of the situation, and he abandoned his intention of maintaining the supremacy of Florence through the instrumentality of Piero de' Medici.

Nevertheless the king at first attempted to assume the position of a conqueror dictating terms to a conquered city, but when his pretensions became known, there were signs of an outburst of popular fury, and he had to modify his proposals. Finally he submitted his ultimatum, and then an ever-memorable scene occurred. In the opinion of the commissioners it contained terms to which Florence could never submit, and was couched in language which they deemed insulting. When they remonstrated, Charles, hoping to carry matters with a high hand, replied angrily that if his terms were not accepted he would order his trumpets to be sounded. Whereupon Piero Capponi sprang to his feet, tore the paper on which the conditions were written in two, and rejoined, "If you sound your trumpets we will ring our bells." He was about to leave the room to put his threat into execution, when the king (having seen a few days before what the "ringing of the bells" meant) called him back and had the good sense to laugh the matter off. Twenty-seven articles were finally agreed upon, the most important of which were:—I. That an alliance offensive and defensive should be entered into between France and Florence; II. That Florence should pay to Charles 120,000 ducats; and III. That Pisa, Leghorn, Pietrasanta, and Sarzana should be restored to Florence at the end of the war. A treaty containing these terms was solemnly sworn to by the two contracting parties in the Duomo on November 25th, 1494, and the king left Florence for Rome two days afterwards. He would probably have stayed longer, but the Florentines had become impatient, and at the request of the Signory, Savonarola warned him that he was neglecting the task which Providence had imposed on him. Accordingly the king, fearful of incurring divine displeasure, departed, but he did not go empty-handed. Among the art-treasures which he carried off from the Medici palace, where he had been residing, was a figure of a unicorn worth

7,000 ducats, several cups made of agate, a great number of wonderfully cut cameos, and 3,000 gold and silver medals.

He marched through Rome to Naples, which he entered on February 22nd, 1495. Though he had met with little resistance the conduct of his troops had spread terror far and wide. They butchered soldiers and peasants in cold blood, and committed all kinds of atrocities. King Alfonso fled, leaving the hopeless task of defending his dominions to his son Ferdinand. At the end of three months Charles quitted Naples, having made himself as odious to the supporters of the house of Anjou as to those of the house of Aragon, for his sole object seems to have been to return to France laden with booty.

He had good reason to fear that he would not be allowed to march northwards unimpeded, for on March 31st a league against him had been formed between Milan, Venice, Pope Alexander, the King of Spain, and the Emperor Maximilian.¹ The news of his arrival at Siena caused Florence some alarm, which was aggravated when she heard that Piero de' Medici was with him. Active measures were taken for the defence of the city, and Savonarola was despatched to the French camp. The latter precaution would have alone sufficed. The king gave audience to Savonarola, for whom he had a superstitious reverence, at Poggibonsi, and he was so frightened at the Friar's threats of divine wrath that he abandoned his intention of entering Florence, and proceeded on his homeward march through Pisa. It was not until he reached Fornovo, not very far from Parma, that he encountered any opposition. He was there met by the army of the League, some 40,000 strong, and in a battle which took place on July 6th, his forces, which now numbered only 9,000, would have been annihilated but for the incapacity and greed for plunder of his opponents. Charles might have gained a complete victory, but he decamped during the night, and reached Asti with difficulty on July 15th. There he was overtaken by ambassadors from Florence demanding that Pisa should be restored in pursuance of the treaty of November, 1494, but Charles would make no order for its restitution until he had received a further sum of 30,000 ducats. Whilst at Asti, Charles's army was reinforced by the arrival of 20,000 Swiss

¹ The ostensible object of the League was to defend Christendom against the Turks, but the Turks were secret parties to it. Its real object was to drive Charles out of Italy, and this was made known to him by Philip de Comines.

mercenaries, and even now he could have subjugated Italy had he turned southward. But the light-minded monarch was satisfied with his ephemeral success, and hastened back to France. The whole history of his expedition is alike disgraceful to France and Italy. Nevertheless it was a turning-point in modern history, for it was, to use the pregnant phrase of Michelet, "no less than the revelation of Italy to the nations of the North." France became infected by the spirit of the Renaissance, and through her it was communicated to other transalpine kingdoms. And for poor Italy herself the invasion of Charles VIII. opened a new era, "but only in the same sense as a pageant may form the prelude to a tragedy."¹

¹ Symonds, i. 531-534.

CHAPTER XXI

1494-1498

THE CONSIGLIO MAGGIORE—SAVONAROLA

THE political confusion which reigned in Florence, after Charles's departure, has often been attributed to the corrupting influences of the Medici rule. It was in truth but a return to the constitutional experiments, the class jealousies, and popular disturbances of pre-Medicean days. On December 8th a general assembly of the people was convened, when the Council of Seventy was abolished and their functions were transferred to twenty *Accoppiatori*, who were known as the *Venti*.¹ On this body was conferred the duty of appointing the members of the Signory and certain other public officials, and in it the supreme control of public affairs was virtually vested for the space of one year.² It was a system which had worked with but indifferent success when the *Accoppiatori* were directed by a master-mind, but now that there was no such direction it proved a complete failure.

Francesco Valori and Piero Capponi were the only men of mark among the *Venti*—the former had in him the making of a successful demagogue and the latter was a capable general—but neither was a statesman. The new government had indeed hardly begun its work before there was a general call for another change. It was so weak, from internal dissensions, that some time elapsed before it could appoint a gonfalonier, and it had much difficulty in maintaining order. There was a cry for blood among the populace which, but for the aid of Savonarola's influence, the *Venti* would have been powerless to repress.³ As

¹ Their names are given in Guicciardini, p. 120.

² Their choice was limited to the names of those who were in the election bags appertaining to their respective offices. This method was called that of "the open bag," or "by hand" (*le borse aperte*, or *a mano*). If the names were drawn by lot, it was that of "closed bags" (*le borse serrate*). Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 248, note.

³ The *Venti* were anxious to repress it as most of them had been adherent of the Medici, and they feared that they might become its victims.

it was, Antonio di Bernado, who had been at the head of the Public Debt Department in the days of Piero de' Medici, "was hung from a window of the Bargello to content the people."¹ He was an honest man whose only offence was that he had been promoted by the Medici from an obscure position on account of his ability.

Protracted debates took place in the Councils as to the form of government which was to supersede the *Accoppiatori*. One party, headed by Pagolo Antonio Soderini, advocated a constitution on the Venetian model, while another, led by Guidantonio Vespucci, held that any such constitution was unsuited to the social conditions of Florence. The former party was the stronger and the most popular, as the Florentines looked with envious eyes on the only government in Italy which, without vicissitudes, had preserved its republican form. This was but another instance of a trait in their character which has been repeatedly noticed. They were satisfied with the form of liberty, whether the substance was there or not. It is not, therefore, surprising that they ignored the true character of the Venetian Constitution, which, while nominally a republic, was, in fact, a tyrannous and aristocratic oligarchy. At length the people became weary of the futile discussions that went on in the palace, and they turned for guidance to the Duomo, where, Sunday after Sunday, Savonarola was unfolding his views of an ideal political organisation. In his discourses, prior to December 12th, he had dealt with politics in the abstract, touching on the principles by which they should be governed, but on that day he commenced a course of sermons in which he discussed them in the concrete. In the last of the course, after exhorting his hearers to fear God, to reform their mode of life, and to subordinate private interests to the public good, he described in detail the form of government which he recommended them to adopt. It was, in its main features, one after the pattern of the Venetian Constitution, but modified in certain particulars to suit the temper of the Florentine people.² The acumen which he displayed in dealing with mundane affairs was, considering that he had been trained in a cloister, considerable, but it has been overrated.³ It is, however, a little surprising that he should have been carried away by the popular cry for "*Il Consiglio Grande al modo Viniziano*," and did not perceive that the Venetian government was but a

¹ Guicciardini, p. 121. ² Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 265. ³ *Ibid.*, 264.

phantom republic. And his judgment was at fault on a yet more vital point. While no doubt aware that the moral regeneration which he preached was a condition precedent to the success of his ideal government,¹ he failed to realise that such regeneration was not the work of a moment.²

The opinions which he propounded from the pulpit of S. Maria del Fiore attracted great attention, and he was often sent for to the palace to advise the Signory. At length, through his influence, Pagolo Soderini's party carried the day, and laws for the establishment of a reformed government were passed by the end of the year. The *Consiglio del Popolo*, *Consiglio del Comune*, and the "One Hundred" were abolished, and were replaced by a Greater Council (*Consiglio Maggiore*) and a Smaller Council or Senate of Eighty members.³ The Greater Council comprised every citizen of twenty-nine years of age who was *netto di specchio* (i.e. whose taxes were not in arrear), and who was *beneficiato* (i.e. who, or whose father, grandfather, or great-grandfather, had held one of the higher magistracies). If there were more than 1,500 citizens who were duly qualified, the Council was to be divided into three equal parts, each of which was to hold office in turn for six months. At the first election there were 3,200 citizens eligible for membership, and so for eighteen months the sitting *Consiglio Maggiore* numbered rather more than 1,000 members.⁴ The Council of Eighty was elected every six months by the Greater Council from such of their members as had attained forty years of age. The functions of the Signory remained intact, but it was compelled to consult the Eighty on important matters at least once a week.⁵ Legislation could only be initiated by the Signory, and though the Councils could vote against any Bills brought before them, they were not allowed to speak against them. The *Venti* were dissolved in the following June. The new Constitution has been lauded by historians,⁶

¹ "If you turn not to the Lord," he said, "the joyful tidings shall become tidings of woe" (*Ibid.*, 307). Gregorovius' *Rome in the Middle Ages* (1900), vii. 434.

² All through his discourses it is evident that he believed that the triumph of Christianity on earth was at hand.

³ The Council of Eighty was a copy of the Venetian *Pregati*.

⁴ It was for the accommodation of this Council that the great *Sala de' Cinquecento* in the Palazzo Vecchio was built. It is said that the population of Florence was at this time 90,000, but Pagnini doubts it being so large (Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 272).

⁵ The *Otto di Guardia*, the *Dieci di Guerra*, and the Colleges were also preserved.

⁶ Machiavelli, Giannotti, and Guicciardini (Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 302-305).

and it had, no doubt, much to recommend it in the abstract, but like every other Florentine government which had preceded it, except the Medicean, it became a prey to faction.

Savonarola's influence was now at its zenith. The Constitution of 1494 had been practically his work, and the first laws passed after its creation were drawn up almost in his words.¹ The first of these was a much-needed reform of the system of taxation. The *catasto* and the forced loans (which had been so often abused) were abolished, and the *decima* (i.e. a tax equal to one-tenth of income) was henceforth levied only on real property.² The next matters of importance, that occupied the attention of the government, were the granting of an amnesty to all political offenders and the appointment of a Court of Appeal. There was a unanimous desire for the first, but about the second there was much difference of opinion. The board known as the *Otto di Guardia*, which acted as a tribunal for hearing political and criminal causes, was empowered to inflict capital punishment if six out of its eight members voted in favour of the sentence. As they voted by means of beans placed in a bag they came, when sitting as a court, to be known as the *Sei Fave* (Six Beans). They proved themselves thoroughly corrupt, and the proceedings of "The Six Beans" had become a positive scandal. Savonarola now proposed that an appeal should lie from the decision of "The Six Beans" to a court of eighty or a hundred members chosen by the *Consiglio Maggiore*. In these useful reforms the *Ottimati*³ (as the opponents of the new government called themselves) saw an opportunity of bringing the Greater Council into disrepute. They cunningly contrived to substitute for Savonarola's scheme a proposal that the whole of the Greater Council should be the new Court of Appeal, knowing that so large a body was quite unfit to exercise judicial powers, and hoping that its failure as a legal tribunal would lead to its abolition. They also contrived that the two contemplated reforms should be embodied in the same Bill, in order that the desire for an

¹ Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 275.

² A very similar reform of taxation was effected by Lorenzo de' Medici in 1480. Possibly the system then introduced had fallen into abeyance. The same abuse of the *decima* as previously existed went on after 1494, for we find that it was sometimes levied several times in one year (Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 102). Ecclesiastical property was made liable to the *decima*, but the papal sanction to this enactment was not obtained till 1509.

³ So called because they professed a desire for a government by "the best" men.

amnesty might ensure the passing of their own proposal with regard to the Court of Appeal. When the matter was debated they disingenuously argued that their proposition was more in accordance with democratic principles than Savonarola's, and on March 19th, 1495, the Bill became law.¹ This was the first victory of the party who aimed at the destruction of the new constitution, and the first step towards Savonarola's overthrow. Either Savonarola realised this or, like many another great man, he could not brook opposition, for henceforth there was an irritation in the tone and violence in the language of his sermons which had not been there before.² Nevertheless he continued to take an active part in politics, and through his instrumentality laws were passed for the establishment of a Tribunal of Commerce and a *Montè di Pietà*, and for the abolition of parliaments.³

Nor was he silent on foreign affairs which were just then exciting much attention. The French king, notwithstanding his solemn promises, had not restored Pisa to Florence; and had sold Pietrasanta to Lucca, and Sarzana and Sarzanello to Genoa.⁴ Pisa had placed herself under the protection of the anti-French League, and Florence had, in consequence, been drawn still closer to France. She refused to throw in her lot with the powers who were striving to avert a second invasion of Italy unless they would guarantee her the restitution of Pisa.⁵ And in this selfish policy she was encouraged by the preaching of Savonarola, who still looked to the French monarch to regenerate Italy, and with a curiously perverted view of moral principles, he promised his hearers the recovery of Pisa as a reward for a return to a virtuous life.

The line that he took on this matter, though he may have temporarily increased his influence at home, made him deservedly unpopular abroad, for it was adverse to the true interests of Italy. But at home, through the combined action of many causes, his ascendancy was on the wane. He had been playing a fourfold part, and his influence had been derived from different

¹ Savonarola has been taxed by Guicciardini and Machiavelli with the authorship of this measure, but it was passed in opposition to his wishes (Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 286, note 2). ² *Ibid.*, i. 287.

³ An ancient court, called the *Casa della Mercatanzia*, was re-established (*Ibid.*, i. 288 and 297).

⁴ Leghorn was the only one of the dependencies ceded by Piero to Charles VIII. that had been restored to Florence.

⁵ Guicciardini, p. 138.

sources. He was at once inspired prophet, political reformer, moral teacher, and religious zealot, and so long as he was able to sustain each character his power was irresistible. Charles VIII. when he entered Italy was believed to be the divinely appointed scourge of evil-doers whose coming Savonarola had predicted, but when he recrossed the Alps, without having performed his mission, the Friar's claim to be a prophet began to be doubted. So long as Savonarola was evolving a new constitution his words commanded universal attention, but when this was accomplished his following fell off. His disciples, however, continued to be numerous, and no doubt included not a few whose hearts had been permanently touched by his words, but many of them were children or men and women whose newly awakened religion trenched on hysteria. The reporter who took down many of his sermons often left blanks in his notes because, as he tells us, he was so overcome by weeping that he could not go on. And another of Savonarola's hearers says that his sermons "caused such terror, alarm, sobbing, and tears that everyone passed through the streets without speaking, more dead than alive."¹ He had, moreover, like all fearless and uncompromising reformers, made many enemies. Indeed, soon after his preaching began to attract attention, some hostility towards him showed itself, but this was entirely overshadowed by the enthusiastic admiration and reverence with which he was then regarded by multitudes of his fellow-citizens. The opposition was now, however, becoming more apparent, and it was gradually gaining strength from different quarters. Some regarded his political views as dangerously democratic. Others disliked the style of his preaching or the doctrines that he inculcated. The Franciscans hated him because he was a source of power to the Dominicans, and the vicious because he denounced their mode of life. He was odious to Pope and Curia because he attacked the morals of the one and the government of the other; and to Milan and Venice because he impeded Florence from joining the anti-French League.² From these causes, various factions, all more or less adverse to him, had sprung up, and they were distinguished by significant party-names. The most numerous, and most openly and bitterly hostile of these, was composed of men to whom his teaching, either on politics or religion, was an offence, and because they were enraged or "rabid" they were called *Arrabbiati*. Some of this faction,

¹ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 37.

² Guicciardini, p. 139.

whose mode of life had incurred Savonarola's censure, were known as *Compagnacci* (Bad Companions).¹ The most violent of the *Ottimati*² were also to be found in the *Arrabbiati* party, but the more moderate of them, such as Guidantonio Vespucci, used the party without joining it. The *Bianchi* (Whites) were those who shared Savonarola's political views, but disliked him personally. They were so called from their harmless character. The *Bigi* (Greys)³ comprised Mediceans who professed to support the Friar for having procured them an amnesty, but were secretly plotting for the return of Piero. The Friar's supporters called themselves *Frateschi* (adherents of the *Frate*), but they were derisively called by their opponents *Piagnoni* (Mourners) because they wept at the eloquence of their master.⁴

Savonarola was not ignorant of the dangers which beset him. At the end of 1494 he foretold his own martyrdom from the pulpit.⁵ His sermons during the early part of 1495 were a strange compound of religion and politics, interspersed with ecstatic visions and enforced with fantastic interpretations of Scripture.⁶ In one of these he endeavoured to convert the Republic into a Theocracy, and he proclaimed Jesus Christ King of Florence. Whether these discourses transformed, as if by magic, pleasure-loving Florence into the puritanically demure city described by Professor Villari, even for a time, is doubtful. Their effect, at any rate, except in a few instances, was as transient as that of the preaching of the White Penitents. It depended more on his personal influence than on any change in the hearts of his disciples. He devoted much attention to improving the manners of the children, and he succeeded in stopping a "foolish and brutal custom" of stone-throwing at the time of the Carnival, which often caused fatal injuries, and which the authorities had been unable to suppress.⁷ This he accom-

¹ Possibly the *Compagnacci* did not become a distinct sect until a few months later.

² Most of the *Ottimati* had been Mediceans. They had supported Lorenzo, but they would have nothing to do with Piero.

³ Probably so called from their desire to keep their real policy out of sight (Napier, iii. 548). They were also called *Palleschi*.

⁴ They were also opprobriously termed *Collitorti* (literally, wrynecks; figuratively, hypocrites), *Stropiccioni* (Dissemblers), and *Masticapaternostri* (Prayer-mumblers). Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 344.

⁵ Creighton, iv. 252. On May 24th an attempt was made to take his life by the *Arrabbiati* (Landucci, p. 106), and another in the following year was instigated by Lodovico Il Moro (Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 51).

⁶ Villari's *Savonarola*, i. 338-342.

⁷ *Ibid.*, ii. 46.

plished by diverting their energies into less dangerous channels. He organised processions of boys and girls, which numbered many thousands, and which paraded the streets singing psalms and hymns.¹ The immediate result of these proceedings was no doubt excellent, but whether they bore any solid or permanent fruit may well be questioned. Very possibly such conduct, artificial and unspontaneous as it must have been on the part of the children, did but end in "shaming their elders into hypocritical piety, and breeding in their own hearts the intolerable priggishness of premature pietism."²

Nor were Savonarola's denunciations of ecclesiastical corruption more effective, though they found an echo in the conscience of Europe.³ The pollution of the Roman hierarchy was beginning to arouse universal indignation, but the day of reckoning, though at hand, had not yet dawned. Never had the Church been in so degraded a condition as it was under the Borgian Papacy. The most sacred offices were bought and sold. The lives of Pope and Cardinals were openly immoral. Rome was a sink of shameless vice. Iniquity was at its zenith.⁴ To attempt to cleanse this Augean stable was to incur the undying hatred of such a man as Alexander VI. Accordingly, all of Savonarola's enemies looked upon the Pope as the instrument for accomplishing their designs. The *Arrabbiati* entered into a close alliance with him, and Cardinal Ascanio Sforza (Lodovico's brother) and Fra Mariano da Genezzano (the Dominican who had vainly endeavoured to stem the tide of Savonarola's influence in Lorenzo's days) were both in Rome fanning the flame of the Pope's animosity towards the Friar.

Alexander opened the campaign against Savonarola by inviting him to Rome in July, 1495, to explain his pretensions to a divine mission, but he was seriously ill, and excused himself, on that ground, from obedience. The invitation was couched in very friendly terms, but it is not improbable, had Savonarola accepted it, that he would have found himself in the castle of St. Angelo. The Pope was dissatisfied with Savonarola's reply, and on September 8th he sent a brief, prohibiting him from preaching, pending an inquiry into the nature of his doctrines. At the same

¹ Landucci, pp. 125, 128. Some of these hymns were by Girolamo Benivieni.

² Symonds, i. 481.

³ He received letters of approval from France, Germany, and England (Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 87).

⁴ Gregorovius's *Rome in the Middle Ages* (1900), vii. 432.

time he notified to the Florentines that he would excommunicate them if they again aided Charles VIII.¹ Savonarola continued preaching until, on October 16th, he received a second mandate from Rome, when he bowed to papal authority. His silence, however, occasioned so much discontent that the Signory prevailed on the Pope to remove the prohibition, and they ordered Savonarola to preach a course of Lenten sermons.² On February 17th, 1496, he appeared once more in the pulpit of the Duomo, which was densely crowded. It was clear from the tenor of these discourses that he meditated setting the Pope at defiance, but the Pope, from some inexplicable cause, changed his tactics and sent the Proctor-General of the Dominicans to Savonarola, with the offer of a cardinal's hat, if he would discontinue prophesying. The Friar replied, "Come to my sermon to-morrow and I will answer you." Next day Savonarola reiterated from the pulpit his belief in his prophetic mission, and exclaimed, "I seek neither hat nor mitre, I desire only what Thou hast given to Thy Saints—death. Give me a hat, a red hat, but red with blood; that is my desire."³ The struggle between Pope and Friar was watched with the keenest interest, and gave rise to a flood of controversial literature which, in virulence and scurrility, bears no slight resemblance to our own Civil War Tracts.⁴

In the autumn of this year Savonarola's prophetic pretensions received, through a coincidence, an apparent confirmation which revived for a time his popularity. Rumours were afloat that Charles VIII. was contemplating a second invasion of Italy, and the parties to the League endeavoured to bribe Florence to break off her alliance with France by promising to aid her in the recovery of Pisa. Florence, however, was distrustful of the allies, and she refused their offer. She knew, moreover, that they were friendly to Piero de' Medici, and she feared that connection with them might lead to his restoration. The League thereupon determined to frighten or force her into compliance with their wishes. With this object in view they lured Maximilian into Italy by the promise of the imperial crown.⁵ Maximilian reached Pisa in October, and he proceeded at once to lay siege to

¹ Creighton, iv. 254. ² *Ibid.*, 255; Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 46.

³ Creighton, iv. 260. This sermon was preached on August 20th, 1496.

⁴ A likeness may also be traced between the *Frateschi* and the Puritans.

⁵ Maximilian I. was chosen King of the Romans in 1486, and on the death of his father, Frederick III., he succeeded to the imperial throne, and he desired to be crowned in Rome.

Leghorn, while the Venetian fleet blockaded the port. As the town was ill supplied with food its capitulation seemed inevitable. Florence was now in a great strait. Her general, Piero Capponi, had died in September, and her army, which was besieging Pisa, had been forced to retire in the same month. The papal forces had invaded her territory, and had been with difficulty driven over the Sienese border. Corn was at famine prices and the poor were dying from starvation. It was publicly stated that the League were so confident of victory, that they had agreed how the Florentine territory should be partitioned among them. The gloom which pervaded the city was relieved only by the indecent mirth of the *Arrabbiati*, who could not conceal their joy at disasters which tended to prove the Friar a false prophet.¹ Their mirth was, however, short-lived. On October 28th, at the request of the Signory, Savonarola preached in the cathedral. On October 30th he organised a penitential procession, at the head of which was carried the Madonna del Imbruneta, and while it was parading the streets the news arrived that Florentine vessels, laden with provisions, had broken the blockade during a storm and entered the port of Leghorn. The good tidings were received with an outburst of joy, and cries of "The Friar's sermons have saved us again" rang out on all sides; and when in the following month Maximilian left Tuscany and returned ingloriously across the Alps, Florence felt that she was safe, and Savonarola's reputation as a prophet was re-established.²

The renewal of the Friar's influence was unwelcome news to the Pope, and he contrived, by a skilful move, to counteract it. The Dominican convents of Tuscany had, at Savonarola's request, been separated from those of Lombardy and placed under his special charge. He had worked indefatigably for their reformation, and their present condition was thoroughly healthy. The Pope now directed the union of the Tuscan and Roman convents into one Congregation, which was to be controlled by a Roman Vicar. The change was aimed at Savonarola's independence, and it meant the undoing of all his reformatory work. It placed him on the horns of a dilemma. Between allowing the Tuscan houses to relapse into disorder and disobeying the Pope there was no alternative. Savonarola chose the latter course, but his decision met with the disapproval of many of his followers, and it weakened his position. This was

¹ Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 112.

Ibid., ii. 116.

not, however, immediately evident, and his accession of popularity, consequent on Maximilian's discomfiture, occasioned the return of the *Frateschi* to power. In January, 1497, Francesco Valori was chosen gonfalonier, and the Signory who entered office were ready to do his bidding. Had he been a man of tact and judgment the tragedy of 1498 might possibly have been averted. But, following foolish counsel and evil precedents, he proceeded to persecute his opponents. He banished Franciscan preachers who were hostile to Savonarola, and he recalled to Florence citizens who, from their attachment to Cardinal de' Medici, had taken up their abode in Rome. He introduced a graduated income tax (*decima scalata*) which, though popular with his own followers, still further incensed the opposite party. Savonarola, who foresaw that mischief was brewing, urged that the Greater Council should be reduced in numbers in order to exclude those who were plotting against the Republic. But Valori, who was a *doctrinaire* politician, not only turned a deaf ear to this sage advice, but passed a measure extending the age of those who were eligible for seats on the Council from twenty-nine to twenty-four. The effect of this was that many of the *Compagnacci*, whose activity was increasing under the leadership of Doffo Spini, and who formed the most violent and unprincipled section of the opposition, obtained a voice in the government.

During the gonfaloniership of Francesco Valori the famous "Burning of the Vanities" took place. Savonarola, during the whole of his preaching career, had never ceased to inveigh against luxury in all its forms, and he now demanded of his hearers some outward and visible sign that his words had reached their hearts. It had long been a custom in Florence "to erect cabins of firewood and other combustibles on the public piazza during the time of the Carnival, and on the night of Shrove Tuesday, these huts being set ablaze, the people were wont to dance around them while thus burning, men and women that is to say, joining hands, according to ancient custom, encircled these fires, with songs and dances."¹ Savonarola conceived the idea of converting these revels into a religious ceremony, and his scheme received approval and assistance from the government. Organised bands of children were sent from house to house to collect *anathamæ*, i.e. all objects which, in the eye of ascetism,

¹ Vasari, ii. 448.

ministered to worldliness or sin. Sometimes such articles were voluntarily surrendered, but sometimes the children were dismissed with a sound beating.¹ The collection thus formed was of a very heterogeneous character. It comprised costumes and carnival masks, false hair and rouge-pots, musical instruments and chess-boards, cards and dice-boxes, books and pictures which were, or were supposed to be, of an indecent character, and "casts and sculptures of considerable beauty."² Many of the objects consigned to the fire were made of costly materials and were of artistic workmanship. Some doubtless deserved no better fate, but others (*e.g.* early editions of Boccaccio and studies from the nude by Fra Bartolommeo and Lorenzo di Credi) would now be of almost priceless value.³ A Venetian merchant offered 22,000 florins for the entire collection. A pyramidal scaffold of seven stages (signifying the seven deadly sins), with faggots in its centre, was erected in the Piazza della Signoria, and on it were placed all the "vanities" which had been collected during the Carnival. On February 7th (Shrove Tuesday), 1497, while children, marshalled on the Ringhiera and under the Loggia de' Lanzi, were chanting lauds and pious doggerel, the pile was fired in the presence of a vast throng of spectators. The bells rang, trumpets sounded, and the Signory appeared on the balcony of the palace to give an official aspect to the ceremony.

Savonarola has been repeatedly censured for this proceeding. No doubt it was deserving of censure in so far as it occasioned the destruction of much which posterity could ill afford to lose. No doubt Savonarola's views on Art and Culture were narrow. He was altogether out of sympathy with the humanistic movement, and he failed to appreciate the nobler side of Paganism. He held that Poetry and Painting, if not didactic, were worthless.⁴ Nevertheless it is unjust to represent him as the unreasoning foe of Art and Culture. Had he been so it is next to impossible that he would have numbered among his disciples Michelangelo, Botticelli, Lorenzo di Credi, Fra Bartolommeo, Cronaca, and the Della Robbia. Nor would he have instructed the lay brothers of S. Marco to occupy themselves with painting or sculpture,

¹ It was found necessary "in order to keep up the figment of a pious rising generation" that they should be protected by a bodyguard of grown-up persons (Burckhardt, p. 477).

² Villani's *Savonarola*, ii. 138; Trollope, iv. 133. ³ Vasari, ii. 448.

⁴ "The limitations which he imposed would have been fatal to the development of art if they had been observed" (Symonds, iii. 310).

or have allowed printed copies of his sermons to have been illustrated with woodcuts, or a crucifix, carved by Donatello, to have been carried at the head of his processions.¹ That he was not an enemy to learning is conclusively proved by his having approved of the purchase by the Friars of San Marco of the Medici library (which had been deposited in their convent) in order to save its dispersal, and this at a time when the convent was so poor that the purchase-money had to be raised by loan. "The Burning of the Vanities" was a striking and dramatic testimony of Savonarola's ascendancy over the minds of a sensuous, pleasure-loving people. It had been rendered possible by a temporary reaction of popular opinion in his favour, but the storm which was to overwhelm him was steadily gathering. The Pope's animosity towards him, which was based as much on political as on ecclesiastical or personal grounds, increased when Florence once more refused to join the League. "We do not know whence springs this obstinacy of yours," he said to her ambassador; and then angrily exclaimed, "We believe that it has its root in the prophecies of your chattering friar."² Savonarola's position was also weakened by an unsuccessful attempt on the part of Piero de' Medici to recover his supremacy over his native city. Piero was emboldened to take this step by the attitude of the Pope towards Florence³ and by the election of a new gonfalonier, Bernardo del Nero, who was leader of the *Bigi*. Although he had been secretly warned by the gonfalonier that his coming was premature, he arrived outside the walls of Florence on April 28th at the head of some 1,300 men. The Florentines had, however, received intelligence of his approach, and he found the gates of the city closed. After waiting a few hours, vainly expecting that his friends would rise and effect his admittance, he returned ignominiously to Siena. The one link which occasionally united the *Frateschi* and *Arrabbiati* was now broken. Their common hatred of Piero had sometimes made them to act together, but now that his cause was hopelessly discredited there was nothing to mitigate the hostility between them.

A Signory, composed mainly of *Arrabbiati*, came into office

¹ For passages from his works bearing on Art see Gruyer's *Illustrations des écrits de Jérôme Savonarola* (Paris, 1879), pp. 183-208.

² Creighton, iv. 263.

³ Piero had taken up his abode in Rome, where he had been leading a dissolute life.

on April 28th, 1497, and in order to silence Savonarola they prohibited (on the pretext of an alarm of plague) all preaching on and after May 5th.

Savonarola was to preach on May 4th (Ascension Day), and the *Compagnacci* determined to take advantage of his final appearance in the Cathedral to make away with him.¹ While he was preaching one of their number, in accordance with a preconcerted arrangement, caused a great disturbance, during which it was intended that his life should be taken. They were, however, foiled in their attempt, for, though the confusion in the Cathedral was such as had not been seen since the murder of Giuliano de' Medici, they found the preacher surrounded by an armed band of faithful adherents, who escorted him in safety back to the convent of San Marco.

When the news of this scandalous scene reached the Pope's ears, instead of censuring its authors, he excommunicated Savonarola. The chief reason alleged for this step was Savonarola's disobedience in neglecting to come to Rome and in refusing to unite the convent of San Marco with the new Tusco-Roman Congregation. The brief, though signed on May 13th, was not published till June 18th. Savonarola refused to acknowledge the validity of the excommunication, stating his reasons in a letter which he addressed to "All Christians." The Signory, who entered office in July, were composed of Savonarola's friends, and they made strenuous, though unavailing efforts, to persuade the Pope to remove it.

In August the late gonfalonier, Bernardo del Nero, Lorenzo Tornabuoni, and three other citizens of high social standing, were convicted of having held treasonable correspondence with Piero de' Medici in the previous spring. There seems to have been no question as to their guilt, but their trial and condemnation were highly irregular. The Eight before whom they were brought feared to sentence them, on account of their position, and the Signory appointed twelve additional judges to assist at their trial. The members of this hastily constituted court also hesitated to pass a sentence of death, but were intimidated into doing so by the overbearing conduct of Francesco Valori, who, it is said, was bent on ridding himself of his powerful

¹ They first thought of blowing up the pulpit with gunpowder while Savonarola was in it. Having abandoned this plan they filled the pulpit with filth and nailed an ass's skin to it, but the skin was removed and the pulpit cleansed before the sermon commenced (Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 181).

opponent, Bernardo del Nero.¹ The prisoners claimed that they had a statutory right of appeal to the Greater Council, but their claim was disallowed, and all were beheaded in the *cortile* of the Bargello. Whether Savonarola can be held in any degree responsible for their death is not certain. He said himself that he would rather del Nero had been banished than put to death, and that he had mildly recommended Tornabuoni to mercy on account of his youth. Possibly, through his influence with the Signory, he could have procured a mitigation of the sentence, had he been so minded.² The plea raised on his behalf, by one of his biographers,³ that he was so engaged on his great work, *Il Trionfo della Croce*, that he had not time to attend to such matters, is certainly a poor one. It should be remembered, however, that he had but little influence with Francesco Valori, who was the moving spirit in the affair.

The three succeeding Signories were also composed mainly of *Frateschi*, but nevertheless Savonarola's influence continued to decline. Some of his followers were disappointed that neither Church nor State had been reformed in accordance with his predictions, and the consciences of others were troubled at his disobedience to the Pope.⁴ The Signory continued to press the Pope to withdraw the excommunication, but their endeavours were thwarted by the *Arrabbiati*, and the Pope refused even to treat with them unless Savonarola were delivered into his hands. On Christmas Day Savonarola appeared once more in the pulpit, and he preached continuously during February, 1498, and, in spite of the papal ban, administered the Communion with his own hand to all who were present. Many came to hear him, but many stayed away from fear.⁵ On Shrove Tuesday there was another bonfire of the Vanities, but this time those who prepared it met with insults and rough treatment at the hands of the *Compagnacci*. The majority of the Signory who came into office in March were hostile to Savonarola, but jealousy of ecclesiastical interference was common to all Florentine factions, and a second demand by the Pope that the Friar should be sent to Rome was refused. The Pope then intimated that unless the government prohibited Savonarola from

¹ Guicciardini, p. 159. Valori's conduct on this occasion closely resembles that of Bartolo Simonetti when in 1371 he forced the Signory to vote away their supremacy at the bidding of the *Parte Guelfa*.

² Trollope, iv. 163.

³ Burlamacchi.

⁴ Guicciardini, p. 167.

⁵ Landucci, pp. 162, 163.

entering the pulpit he would lay the city under an interdict. The threat gave rise to an animated debate, and on March 17th it was resolved, by way of compromise, that Savonarola should, if possible, be dissuaded from preaching. The Friar bowed to the wish of the Signory. On March 18th he delivered his last sermon in the Cathedral, and his farewell to his congregation. He realised that he was in great peril, and he wrote letters to all the principal sovereigns of Europe charging the Pope with simony, atheism, and immorality, and urging them to convene a General Council of the Church. Though drafts of these letters are in existence, it is probable that they were never sent.

Meanwhile pulpit warfare between the two monastic orders was being waged with increased bitterness, and the tide of fortune, which had hitherto been on the side of the Dominicans, was shifting. So long as the Franciscans could only impugn Savonarola as a religious or social reformer, their oratory was unheeded,¹ but his present attitude towards the Pope gave them a more popular ground of attack. It had a political aspect (for the papacy was always regarded in Florence as a political rather than an ecclesiastical institution), and it gave rise to a controversy for which the Florentines were all ears. Although the Dominicans had no thought of secession, the arguments of which they made use to justify Savonarola's disobedience to the Pope formed the very bed-rock of Protestantism, and the Franciscans had little difficulty in showing that the position which their opponents had taken up was incompatible with loyalty to the Church. All unknowingly the Dominicans were paving the way for Luther and Calvin. There was no escape from the authority of the Pope save by an appeal to the right of private judgment. "An excommunication that is unjustified need not be regarded," said Savonarola. The proposition was accepted by the most ardent of his adherents, but his adversaries, and even his more thoughtful followers, perceived its logical outcome. "Just or unjust," said they, "an excommunication is to be feared." Passion, however, ran too high for the differences between the contending parties to be settled in the field of argument. A certain Frà Francesco da Puglia, a member of the Order of S. Francis, challenged Savonarola to put the truth of his doctrines to the test of an ordeal by fire.² Frà Domenico da Pescia, one of the Friar's most devoted

¹ Creighton, iv. 275.

² Much difference of opinion has prevailed as to the side from which the challenge proceeded. Landucci says it was given by the Dominicans, but the

disciples, accepted the challenge on behalf of his master, but the Franciscan would only enter the fire with Savonarola. The incident would doubtless have ended in words, as it had met with Savonarola's disapproval, had not the *Compagnacci* seen in it a means of compassing Savonarola's ruin. "If Savonarola enters the fire," they said, "he will undoubtedly be burned; if he refuses to enter it he will lose all credit with his followers"; and in the latter contingency they foresaw that a tumult would arise, during which they might be able to seize his person or perhaps kill him.¹ They accordingly broached the matter to the Signory who, actuated by the same sinister motives, and seeing a way of ending their differences with the Pope, sanctioned the proposal. Savonarola discountenanced the trial, and steadily refused to submit to it himself, but he became infected by Frà Domenico's enthusiasm, and did not prohibit it.² He seems to have believed that it would end in his own triumph. All arrangements were undertaken by the Signory, who finally ordered that the ordeal should take place on April 7th. The Pope declined to sanction it or to prevent it. Probably he secretly desired it, but dared not openly approve of the revival of a barbarous custom.³

Frà Francesco da Puglia still refused to enter the fire with anyone but Savonarola and, though many Dominicans volunteered to submit to the test, the Franciscans had great difficulty in finding a champion. Ultimately they induced Frà Giuliano Rondinelli to enter the lists on their behalf. It is said that the poor man exclaimed, when he signed the articles, that he knew he would be burnt and that he had only consented for his soul's salvation. It is probable, however, that he had been secretly assured by the Signory that the ordeal would be stopped at the last moment. A proclamation was issued by the government that if Frà Domenico perished in the flames, Savonarola was to be exiled, but no mention was made of what was to happen in the event of Frà Giuliano being consumed.

editor of his *Diario* (p. 166, note) and Professor Villari (*Life of Savonarola*, ii. 299) have adopted the version which I have given in the text. The idea was doubtless suggested by the ordeal through which the Vallombrosan monk, "Pietro Igneo," passed in 1063.

¹ Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 300.

² Many of his followers believed that he would feel constrained to enter the fire, and that a miracle would be wrought (*Ibid.*, ii. 307).

³ It is, however, possible that he disliked an appeal from his authority to a Higher Power. His conduct in this matter is represented in very different lights by Bishop Creighton and Professor Villari.

From the elaborate preparations made by the Signory it would appear that they intended the ordeal to take place, but these were probably only a blind. A brick platform, 76 feet long, had been erected in the Piazza, on which bundles of faggots sprinkled with oil had been placed, so arranged that the champions could not escape without passing through flames. The Loggia de' Lanzi had been partitioned by a boarding, the space on one side of which was allotted to the Dominicans and that on the other to the Franciscans. At midday on April 7th, 1498, Frà Domenico, accompanied by Savonarola and two hundred Dominicans, took their places under the Loggia. Frà Giuliano and the Franciscans went into the Palazzo Vecchio, and put forward a series of frivolous and dilatory pleas to excuse their non-appearance: e.g. that Frà Domenico's clothes had been charmed, and that his safety had been insured by Savonarola's incantations. The mob began to show their impatience, and the *Compagnacci* assaulted the Loggia, and tried to lay violent hands on Savonarola, but they were driven back by a band of his followers under Marcuccio Salviati. Then the proceedings were delayed by a heavy thunderstorm. Finally the Franciscans contrived to inveigle Savonarola into a long theological discussion, and before its conclusion the Signory withdrew their permission for the holding of the ordeal, and the two bands of monks retired to their convents.

The trial by fire had been a complete fiasco, but none the less Savonarola's ruin was accomplished. His enemies had played a skilful game. From the very outset they had so arranged matters that it was a case of "Heads I win, Tails you lose." The Signory deliberately promulgated the report that the contest had been prevented by Savonarola's cowardice. The Franciscans repeated the lie and impudently claimed to be the victors.¹ The bulk of the *Frateschi* felt that they had been humiliated, and they were indignant with their master for having failed to vindicate the truth of his opinions. Almost in an instant the current of popular opinion, which had flowed so strongly in his favour, was turned more strongly against him. He was stoned and execrated by the mob as he left the Piazza, and but for

¹ Whatever cowardice was displayed was on the part of the Franciscans. In justice to them it should, however, be remembered that they never believed that their champion would pass unscathed through the flames. They said they were willing to sacrifice him to expose an imposture. The Dominicans probably believed that their champion would be miraculously preserved.

Salviati's escort he would not have reached S. Mark's alive. The rage of the multitude may be gathered from the state of affairs two days later. "On the 9th of April nothing more was done; arms were at rest, but not tongues; hell seemed let loose. Men were never weary of crying 'Thief!' and 'Traitor!' and anyone who had ventured to say a word in the Friar's favour would have been killed."¹

On Sunday, April 8th, Frà Mariano degli Ughi, who had desired to pass through the fire with Frà Domenico, was to have preached in the Duomo, but neither he nor any of his companions were allowed to enter the building. They were driven back to their convent by an infuriated crowd amid shouts of "*Assamarcho, assamarcho col fuoco*" ("To S. Marco, to S. Marco, with fire").² Here for a few hours the friars gallantly defended themselves with weapons that, unknown to Savonarola, had been introduced a few days previously. Francesco Valori, who was among the defenders, seeing that resistance was hopeless unless aid from without were obtained, caused himself to be let down by a rope out of a back window, but he was no sooner recognised than he was cut to pieces.³ He fell outside his own house, and his wife, who was looking out of a window at the time, was shot dead by a bolt from a crossbow. Soon after dark the mob fired the gates of the convent and effected an entrance, but they were met at the door of the sacristy by the friars, some of whom were wielding heavy crucifixes, and driven back. Other friars hurled down stones and tiles from the roof on the heads of their assailants, and for a moment it seemed as if they would have succeeded in holding their own. But the Signory, in open violation of their obvious duty to suppress the riot, sent a notice to the convent declaring every one of its inmates a rebel who had not left the building within twelve hours. Thus inspirited, the mob renewed the attack, but they were for a while kept at bay by two friars, who, standing on the high altar in the church, fired on them with arquebusses. All this time Savonarola had been on his knees in prayer, but now, seeing that blood was being shed in a hopeless cause, he arose and called on his supporters to follow him into the library. The captain of the guard of the Palazzo Vecchio, acting under orders of the Signory,

¹ Landucci, p. 171.

² Cambi, *Istorie Deliz. degli Erud. Tosc.*, vol. xxi. p. 119.

³ He was killed by the Tornabuoni and Ridolfi to avenge the death of their kinsmen who had been executed with Bernardo del Nero.

threatened to reduce the convent to ruins if Savonarola, Frà Domenico, and Frà Silvestro were not delivered up to him. The two former at once surrendered, and were imprisoned. Savonarola was lodged in the Alberghettino—the very same cell in the great tower of the Palazzo Vecchio in which Cosimo de' Medici had been confined before his exile. Frà Silvestro hid himself, but was discovered and arrested the next day.

Iniquitous and disorderly as these proceedings had been, they earned for Florence the Pope's blessing. He praised the holy zeal of the Franciscans, and absolved the city from ecclesiastical censure for having stormed a convent. He commended the action of the Signory, and granted them authority to try the three Friars in Florence, but requested that after trial the prisoners should be sent to Rome for punishment. Lodovico il Moro also congratulated the Signory on what they had achieved. Strangely enough, one of Savonarola's predictions received what was for him a fatal fulfilment on the very day fixed for the ordeal. Charles VIII., who had abandoned his task of reforming the Church, died a miserable death on April 7th, and Savonarola lost in him his only powerful supporter at the very moment when he was most in need of help.

There are some black pages to be found in the annals of every nation, but it is doubtful whether the world's history contains one more dishonourable to a government than the narrative of Savonarola's trial and condemnation. The same shameless disregard of law and order, that had marked the proceedings of the Signory during their attack on the convent of S. Marco, characterised their subsequent conduct. "The Eight," who formed the criminal court, before which in the ordinary course Savonarola should have been tried, because they were not supposed to be sufficiently hostile to him were superseded by new members, although their term of office had not expired.¹ But for some reason this was not thought to be sufficient, and seventeen commissioners, all of them Savonarola's avowed enemies, were appointed to conduct the trial.² One of these, Bartolo Zati, when he learned the nature of the work that was expected of him, refused to serve, exclaiming that he would be no party to a homicide.

¹ "The Ten," who were known to be friendly to Savonarola, although they were not a legal tribunal, were similarly displaced.

² Dofio Spini, the leader of the *Compagnacci*, who had more than once attempted to assassinate Savonarola, was one of the seventeen.

The decision of the sixteen so-called judges was of course predetermined, but they desired some show of evidence to support it, and to obtain this they resorted to cruelty, falsehood, and fraud. On the 9th of April Savonarola was put on the rack, but only vague and incoherent statements could be extorted from him. On April 11th the first trial commenced, and it lasted till the 19th. During that period Savonarola was repeatedly subjected to prolonged and terrible torture. On one occasion he was hoisted from the ground by a rope drawn over a pulley, and red-hot coals were applied to the soles of his feet; and on another he was placed on the rack fourteen times in a single day.¹ A notary, by name Ser Ceccone, who had remarked to one of the judges, "If no case exists, one must be invented," was employed to take down the Friar's replies. While on the rack Savonarola was chiefly examined on three points—his religious opinions, his political conduct, and his claim to be a prophet. He was a man of delicate and sensitive frame; his physical powers had been impaired by continuous fasting and severe illness, and his nervous system deranged by the excitement of impassioned oratory; nevertheless on the two first points nothing could be wrung from him which his judges or their scribe could twist into an admission of heresy or treason. On the third point, however, he wavered, but his utterances in the past on this head had often been inconsistent. Sometimes he had declared that he was possessed of prophetic powers, sometimes he had repudiated them, and at others he had endeavoured by sophistical metaphor or subtle analogy to reconcile his previous assertions. It is not then surprising that replies to questions, given while he was undergoing excruciating agony, should have been contradictory.

On April 19th a document, purporting to be a report of Savonarola's replies to the examiners, was signed by him. It is probable that his signature was obtained by a trick, but, be this as it may, it is certain that the signed deposition had been falsified, or, as one of the judges euphuistically put it, "for a good purpose somewhat had been omitted from and somewhat added to it." On the strength of this garbled report many writers have said that he broke down under torture, and even Professor Villari gives a reluctant assent to this view, and offers an elaborate apology for his hero.² But as evidence against Savonarola it is

¹ Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 352.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 352-355, 361.

not worth the paper it was written on. It is in part admittedly fictitious, and which parts of it are additions, which alterations, or what has been omitted it is impossible to discover.¹ Everything tends to show that Savonarola, in spite of his physical infirmities, displayed on the rack heroic fortitude. The Signory in a letter to the Pope, who had complained of their delay in bringing Savonarola to judgment, said that "even by long and arduous examination, continued for many days and with the aid of torture, we could barely extort anything from him."² Indeed the confession wrung from him, after it had been falsified, as far as the judges dared to falsify it in order to make it more incriminating, was deemed by the Signory insufficient for the purpose. Accordingly they resolved on a second trial, in other words a further application of the rack. On two or three days between April 21st and 25th the unfortunate man was again "put to the question," but nothing of material importance could be extracted from him, and the Signory determined to rely on the result of the first trial.

The two other prisoners were tried after the same fashion. Frà Domenico behaved with heroic courage, and though subjected to even worse torture than Savonarola, he steadily adhered to his belief in his master's divine mission. Frà Silvestro, on the contrary, at the mere sight of the rack, confessed himself and Savonarola guilty of every crime laid to their charge. The friars who remained in S. Marco, like Peter, hastened to deny their master, but, unlike Peter, they never repented of their cowardice. They made the most abject recantation, and obtained absolution from the Pope.

The execution of the prisoners was now only delayed by the Pope, who insisted on being in some way a party to their condemnation, if they were not sent to Rome. It was accordingly arranged that he should send two commissioners to pronounce sentence on his behalf. This agreement had not been concluded, before the Signory, who had contrived Savonarola's downfall and conducted his trial, went out of office. It was a matter of vital importance to them that their successors should belong to their own party, or their misdeeds would be exposed and Savonarola liberated. They therefore, when the election of the new Signory

¹ Two editions of the depositions, which differ from each other, were printed by the Signory. The original MS. copy was burned in 1529.

² Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 360.

took place, excluded from the hall, where the votes were recorded, some two hundred members of the Greater Council who were believed to belong to the opposite faction.¹ The Signory, who were thus elected, were quite as hostile to the *Frateschi* as their predecessors. Their first act was to consider whether an "attempt should at least be made, by examining Savonarola anew, to extract all he had in his body, seeing that up to this moment, they had only stripped off the rind." They were dissuaded, however, from making the attempt for fear of creating a scandal.

The apostolic commissioners arrived in Florence on May 19th. It is said that their instructions were "to put Savonarola to death were he even another S. John the Baptist."² On May 20th and the two following days a third mock trial took place. Savonarola was examined under worse torture than ever, but he was now better able to bear pain, and even less could be extracted from him than on the previous occasions. The results of this final examination were never printed, signed, or read to the public, and the trial was practically left unfinished. Nothing had been elicited from him proving his guilt of heresy or crime, nevertheless he and his two associates were condemned to death on the evening of May 22nd by the Pope's representatives.

At about ten a.m. on the following day these three innocent men were led out of their cells, and at the bottom of the great staircase of the Palazzo Vecchio the monastic habit was stripped off them by a Dominican monk, and they were declared heretics and schismatics. After sentence of death had been pronounced by the civil government they were conducted along a raised platform that had been constructed from the Ringhiera to the middle of the Piazza, and there hung side by side. Faggots which had been placed beneath the gallows were immediately ignited, their bodies were consumed, and their ashes collected and thrown from the Ponte Vecchio into the Arno. A picture of the scene, which agrees in all particulars with the written descriptions, may be seen in Savonarola's cell in the convent of S. Marco.

Although the exile of Dante has brought a more lasting reproach on Florence in the eyes of the civilised world, the

¹ This is Nardi's statement, but Professor Villari thinks that the number, two hundred, is an exaggeration. The transaction was, however, quite in accordance with Florentine parliamentary traditions (Villari's *Savonarola*, ii. 379.)

² *Ibid.*, 390.

judicial murder of Savonarola was a greater crime. It was, too, a far more important event in her history. It was the turning-point in her career—the first step on her downward course—the landmark which divides a glorious past from an inglorious future. The story of Florence, from the beginning of the thirteenth to the end of the fifteenth century, was the story of a fierce and constant struggle between Order and Anarchy. Order had generally been able to hold her own, but the struggle had never been an unequal one. The forces which make for disintegration had been controlled, but they were always seething, and Order had to resort to dangerous expedients, and makeshifts of more than questionable morality, to suppress them. Savonarola desired to dispense with props and supports suggested by the wisdom of the serpent, and to place the fabric of a free and strong government on a surer foundation. He essayed by religious enthusiasm to galvanise the quicksand character of the Florentines into solid rock. For a few short years he met with apparent success. But the demons of Discord and Disunion which he exorcised returned with other kindred spirits, entered the house which he had swept and garnished, and the last state of Florence was worse than the first. Henceforward Order fought a losing fight until, in despair, she flung herself into the arms of Tyranny.

CHAPTER XXII

1498-1512

FLORENCE UNDER GONFALONIER SODERINI—THE FALL OF PISA—
THE SCHISMATICAL COUNCIL OF PISA—THE SACK OF PRATO—
THE FLIGHT OF SODERINI

BY the death of Savonarola the dangers which threatened Florence were for a time diminished. Lodovico il Moro became her firm friend, and the Pope ceased to be her active foe. Cesare Borgia appeared to have given up all thought of invading Tuscany, and the League talked no more of reinstating Piero de' Medici. She felt freer, therefore, to turn her attention to the recovery of Pisa, and most of her energies during the next decade were devoted to that end. But the peace of Italy was about to be disturbed by other and more serious causes. The Pope was scheming to found principalities for his son Cesare, and he had purchased the promise of aid in furthering his designs from Louis XII., King of France, by granting him a divorce from a childless wife. Another French invasion of Italy seemed imminent, for Louis had set up a claim to the dukedom of Milan.¹

Florence despatched an army under Paolo Vitelli to besiege Pisa, but the Venetians, in order to befriend Pisa, invaded the Casentino, and the besieging army had to be withdrawn to expel them. This was soon accomplished, and Venice was compelled to conclude a treaty of peace, under which she undertook to discontinue aiding the Pisans. In May, 1499, the attack on Pisa was renewed with vigour, and in July, if the city had been stormed, it would probably have been taken. Vitelli, however, would not order an assault until the breach that had been made in the walls had been enlarged, and before this could be accomplished his army was stricken with malaria, and he had to remove it to a healthier position. The Signory, suspecting treachery, sent

¹ Louis's grandmother was a daughter of Gian Galeazzo Visconti.

commissioners¹ to the camp, who brought Vitelli under arrest to Florence. He was examined on the rack and, though he confessed nothing, he was beheaded the same evening. Vitelli was one of the greatest generals of his day, and Guicciardini thought that he was guiltless.² There are, however, grounds for believing that he was corresponding with Venice and Piero de' Medici, and that he desired to prolong the war.³

Meanwhile the disturbing elements in Italian politics, already alluded to, had begun to work. In May, 1499, a French army crossed the Alps and, aided by Venice and the Pope, expelled Lodovico il Moro from Milan in September. Early in the following year, with the aid of the Emperor Maximilian, he recovered possession of the city, but not a state in Italy would come to his assistance, and he was only able to maintain his position for two months. In April he was meditating a second flight, when he was betrayed by his Swiss mercenaries into the hands of his enemies, who carried him to France, where after eight years' captivity he died.⁴ Florence, blind to the fact that the cause of Lodovico was the cause of national independence, rejoiced at the news of his overthrow. Though he had assisted her in her Pisan expedition, she had refused to help him in his struggle with Louis XII., on account of her traditional French sympathies. She now entered into an alliance with Louis, from which she reaped neither prestige nor profit. In consideration of a promise of large money payments, the King of France sent an army to aid her in recovering Pisa; but his generals, secretly favouring the Pisans, never intended the expedition to succeed, and before long his army was withdrawn. Her disappointment at this failure, however, soon gave place to alarm. Cesare Borgia, with French aid, had been rapidly increasing his dominions. Having possessed himself of Imola, Forlì, Faenza, Pesaro, and Rimini, he appeared at Campi, in the

¹ Machiavelli, who was secretary to the Ten, was one of them.

² Guicciardini, p. 210.

³ Villari's *Machiavelli*, i. 244.

⁴ The story that he was kept in an iron cage is mythical. He was allowed exercise and amusement until, a few months before his death, he attempted to escape, when he was thrown into a dungeon. His character has often been painted in the blackest colours, but it will compare favourably with that of most of his princely contemporaries. He "was the most perfect type of the despot of that age" (Burckhardt's *Renaissance*, p. 41)—ambitious, arrogant, and unscrupulous, but on the whole a just and enlightened ruler, and an enthusiastic patron of Art and Letters. It would have been well for Italy had she stood by him in opposition to Louis XII. For a favourable view of his character see Julia Cartwright's *Beatrice d'Este*, pp. 11-14.

Val d'Arno, whence he imperiously requisitioned Florence to restore the Medici.¹ He had no friendly feelings towards Piero, and it is probable that the demand was only made for the purpose of levying blackmail. If so, it was entirely successful, for, after some parleying, the Signory appointed him Captain-General of the forces of the Republic for three years at a salary of 36,000 florins a year, and undertook not to thwart his designs on Piombino.²

The transaction was an ignominious one for Florence, but she was beset with difficulties and dangers. The exiled Medici, their connections, the Orsini, and Vitellozzo Vitelli (the brother of the *condottiere* Paolo), were all urging Cesare Borgia to attack her. Arezzo, instigated by Vitellozzo, had revolted, and would not have been recovered without aid from Louis XII. Pisan expeditions and French subsidies had emptied her exchequer. The Greater Council refused to vote money to meet her financial engagements, and interfered with the action of the executive in matters of diplomacy. Foreign nations were consequently shy of dealing with a government that was under the necessity of making its negotiations public. Men of ability and influence refused to take part in public affairs. The legal tribunals were thoroughly corrupt. Both Cambi and Guicciardini give a lamentable account of the condition of the city. The former says that "justice no longer existed among the citizens through fear of each other";³ and the latter that "it is difficult to imagine a city so thoroughly shattered and ill regulated as ours was at this time."⁴ Party spirit, like a canker, was still eating into the heart of the body-politic. Factions, with new names, had developed new vitality. The *Frateschi* had been transformed by circumstances into the *Popolani*. As their name implies, they were democrats, and it was to them that the government mainly looked for support. The *Bigi* had cast aside their cloak of nominal neutrality, and now, as *Palleschi*, openly avowed their adherence to the house of Medici. The name of the *Ottimati* was unchanged. They were the inheritors of the principles and traditions of the *Parte Guelfa*, and they were for ever scheming for a plutocratic oligarchy masked under republican forms.⁵

¹ Gino Capponi, iii. 74.

² Pitti's *Istoria Fiorentina*, p. 72.

³ Napier, iv. 110.

⁴ Guicciardini, p. 272.

⁵ Napier, iv. 101. The *Popolani* were still sometimes spoken of as the *Frateschi*.

It was clear to all that some drastic change was necessary to save the State from ruin.¹ Much debate ensued, but the only reform of real importance that was carried was the making the gonfaloniership a life appointment.² The *Palleschi* and *Popolani* each put forward a candidate, but, to the surprise of all, Piero Soderini, who belonged to no party, was elected. He was a well-meaning, public-spirited man, who was deservedly respected, but who had not backbone enough to rule in turbulent days.³ Something of his character may be gleaned from Machiavelli's famous epigram :—

The night that Peter Soderini died,
His spirit hasted to the mouth of Hell :
' Begone, you simpleton,' the Devil cried,
' Your place is where the souls of babies dwell.'⁴

Before the next year was past, one of the dangers to the independence of Florence, after increasing in magnitude, disappeared. The Duke of Valentino, as Cesare Borgia was generally called, had become a very formidable foe.⁵ By an audacious fraud he had dispossessed Guidobaldo Montefeltro of his duchy of Urbino, and he now styled himself "Duke of Romagna, Valence, and Urbino, Prince of Andria, Lord of Piombino, Gonfalonier, and Captain-General of the Holy Roman Church." His designs on Tuscany had hitherto been checked by the King of France but, as Louis had left Italy for a time, he proceeded to put them in execution. He summoned envoys from Florence to his court at Urbino, and insolently said to them, "This government of yours does not please me, and you must change it, otherwise if you refuse me for a friend you shall know me for an enemy."⁶ But the Florentines, who knew that Louis XII. was on his way back to Italy, instructed their ambassadors to temporise. The threat does not seem to have alarmed them, for they said, "We did not fear the King of France with 30,000 soldiers, shall we fear a few ragamuffins led by the unfrocked bastard of a priest?"⁷ When Cesare found that he could get no decided answer from the envoys, he reminded them that the French king would not always be in Italy, and warned them that the day would come when they

¹ Giucciardini, p. 272.

² The ancient office of *podestà* was also abolished, and it was superseded by *La Ruota della Giustizia*, a council of five judges, who presided in turn in the old court of the *podestà*.

³ Napier, iv. 109.

⁴ This is a fairly literal translation. See also Symonds, i. 297.

⁵ He had been created Duc de Valence by Louis XII. in 1499.

⁶ Villari's *Machiavelli*, i. 272.

⁷ Creighton, v. 32.

would be sorry that they had abused his goodness.¹ He might have proved a true prophet, but Florence's good fortune had not yet deserted her. As on former occasions, when she was in a great strait, Death came to her rescue. On August 13th Cesare Borgia and his father Alexander VI., who had supped together on the previous evening, were attacked by sickness, and on August 18th the Pope died. It was commonly reported² that they had, through the mistake of a cup-bearer, drunk poisoned wine intended for a rich cardinal.³ This story was accepted by all contemporary historians,⁴ but it is discredited by modern writers, who attribute the Pope's death to tertian fever.⁵ Cesare recovered after a long and dangerous illness. But as soon as the Pope's death and the condition of his son had become known, most of the States of which they had possessed themselves threw off the Borgia yoke, and Cesare arose from his bed of sickness to find his dominions gone and his power broken. He subsequently went to Spain, and was killed while fighting for the King of Navarre in 1507.

In the same year as Pope Alexander died another foe to Florentine independence was removed. On December 28th Piero de' Medici was accidentally drowned by the upsetting of a boat on the river Garigliano, and the leadership of his party passed into the more competent hands of his brother the cardinal.

The recovery of Pisa was now absorbing the interests of the Florentines, and two foolhardy schemes were pressed on the government by the gonfalonier. In 1504 an attempt was made to divert the Arno and so deprive Pisa of the advantages of a port, and a proclamation was issued that all Pisans, who would leave their city, should be pardoned and have their property restored to them. The result of the one was a fruitless expenditure of public money; and of the other a migration into

¹ Machiavelli was one of the envoys, and his imagination was so dazzled by "the brilliant intellectual abilities of this consummate rogue" (Symonds, i. 317), that in later life, when he unwillingly exchanged a political for a literary career, he held up Cesare Borgia to admiration as an ideal prince. It is, however, admitted on all hands that Cesare brought law and order into Romagna as it had never been there before (Gregorovius, *Rome in the Middle Ages*, vii. 491; Creighton, v. 74).

² Landucci, p. 258.

³ It has been said that it was no uncommon practice for Alexander VI. to poison wealthy cardinals and sell their hats to the highest bidder.

⁴ Guicciardini, Bembo, Jovius, Raphael Volterranus, Egidius, Ferronus, Materazzo, Sanuto, and others.

⁵ Creighton, Gregorovius, Villari, and Gino Capponi.

Florence of Pisans who, through age or infirmity, were incapable of bearing arms. Shortly afterwards, hostile operations against Pisa were suspended, and not resumed till 1507, when altered circumstances allowed the adoption of different tactics. This change arose from an event of momentous importance for the future of Italy, which had occurred in 1500. A most iniquitous compact had been in that year entered into between France and Spain for the partition between them of the kingdom of Naples. Spain had never intended to rest contented with her share of the spoil, and after the capture of Naples, in 1501, there had been continuous warfare between her and France till 1504, when a truce was agreed upon. While this war was in progress Spain had contrived to introduce provisions into Pisa by sea, in order to prevent Florence from aiding France; but when peace was concluded she ceased doing so. Florence had therefore a better chance of reducing Pisa by blockade, of which before long she availed herself. In 1507 she laid siege to the city, and in the following year she secured the non-intervention of France and Spain by promises of large money payments. Pisa, deprived of all sources of supply and of all hope of assistance, saw that further resistance was useless, and surrendered. On June 8th, 1509, the Florentine commissioners triumphantly entered into the city, and Pisa, after an interval of fifteen years, once more became a dependency of Florence.

The reduction of Pisa had been greatly facilitated by the newly organised Florentine militia, for the institution of which the credit rests mainly with Machiavelli. He seems to have realised more fully than any of his countrymen the evils of the *condottiere* system, which he ridiculed and satirised on every possible occasion, and he foresaw in the establishment of a native army the only means of warding off the ruin with which Italy was threatened. Having made the gonfalonier a convert to his views in 1505, he laboured indefatigably until his scheme was accomplished. A Board, known as "The Nine of the Militia," whose duty it was to superintend the enlistment, drill, and efficiency of the force, was created in 1506, and by 1509 thirty companies had been enrolled. One thing, however, rendered Machiavelli's labours abortive. He could not revive a martial ardour which had perished during the employment of mercenary troops.

The death of Alexander VI. and the abasement of his son did not, as might have been expected, bring peace to Italy. His

successor, Pius III., would probably have had a pacific influence on affairs, but he died within a month of his election. He was succeeded (November, 1503) by Giuliano della Rovere, who assumed the title of Julius II.¹ The Church under his leadership became militant in a very mundane sense. He was every inch a soldier, and never so happy as when directing in person the operations of an army. His aims were altogether different from those of Alexander VI.; but the schemes of the one, for the temporal aggrandisement of the Church, provoked as much disorder as the unblushing nepotism of the other. The days when the extension of the papal territory evoked only hostility of Italian States were, however, over. Foreign powers had obtained a firm foothold in Italy. France, Spain, and Germany were struggling for a European ascendancy, and it was obvious that Italy was the battleground on which the struggle would be decided.² The first task which Julius II. set himself was to reduce to submission the Romagnese principalities over which Cesare Borgia had ruled, and which were now independent. The chief obstacle in his path was the opposition of Venice, and he accordingly determined that Venice must be crushed. For effecting this object he found instruments ready to hand. Venice, with her well-known aspirations to the sovereignty of Italy, was looked upon with universal dislike and suspicion. Louis XII. regarded her as a dangerous neighbour to his duchy of Milan; King Ferdinand of Spain feared that the Venetian navy might impair the safety of his Neapolitan kingdom; and the Emperor Maximilian was smarting under the terms of a treaty which he had been compelled by Venice to execute.³ By skilful diplomacy Julius induced these three potentates, who were at heart his foes,⁴ to combine with him for the subjection of Venice and the partition of her mainland dominions.⁵ A treaty for the commission

¹ He was a nephew of Sixtus IV. His portrait by Raphael, in the Uffizi, is one of the best-known pictures in the world. There is a replica or good contemporary copy in the National Gallery, London. ² Creighton, v. 107.

³ Early in 1508 Maximilian, on his way to receive the imperial crown at Rome, had endeavoured to force his way at the head of an army through Venetian territory, and had been driven back across the Alps.

⁴ Louis and Ferdinand were already discussing the possibility of deposing him by means of a Council, and Maximilian was dreaming of uniting the empire and the papacy in his own person.

⁵ To the Pope were to be allotted the States in Romagna which had formerly belonged to the Church; to the Emperor, Padua, Vicenza, Verona, and Friuli; to Spain, the ports occupied by Venice on the Neapolitan coast; and to France, Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, Crema, and other States which at one time belonged to Milan.

of this political crime was signed on December 10th, 1508, and it is known as the League of Cambrai. It succeeded more rapidly than the Pope expected, and more completely than he desired. On May 14th, 1509, the forces of Venice were routed at Vailà¹ in the Ghiara d'Adda, and before long she lost Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, Verona, Piacenza, and Padua. Venice was now sufficiently humbled for the Pope's purpose, and he at once shifted his policy and raised the cry "*Fuori i barbari*" ("Turn out the foreigners"). In 1510 he withdrew from the League of Cambrai, and entered into an alliance with Venice. Henceforth his chief aim was the expulsion of the French from Italy. Louis, who seems to have had scruples of conscience about making war on the Church, after capturing Bologna,² offered to treat, but the Pope refused to come to terms. The King thereupon resorted to another mode of warfare, and in order to create a schism in the Church, he persuaded some French and Spanish cardinals to summon a Council, and he demanded of the Florentines that they should allow it to assemble within their dominions.

This demand placed Florence in an awkward dilemma. If she refused it, she would forfeit the friendship of France. If she acceded to it, she would make an enemy of the Pope. She had been pursuing a vacillating policy which had satisfied nobody, but one which it was difficult to abandon, for it had been dictated by force of circumstances rather than inclination. The city was divided into two political parties, which were so evenly balanced that government was almost at a deadlock.³ The gonfalonier and his supporters (the *Popolani* and those who still called themselves *Frateschi*) were in favour of maintaining the French alliance, while their opponents (the *Palleschi* and *Ottimati*) saw less danger to Florence in the enmity of France than in that of the Pope and Venice. And the difficulty of arriving at a decision was aggravated by the position of the gonfalonier, which had become precarious. His sympathies were French, but he did not desire to increase the ill-will of the Pope who, it was believed, had connived at a plot for his assassination in the

¹ It is also called the battle of Agnadello.

² Bologna was lost to the Pope through the treachery of Cardinal Alidosi, who laid the blame on the Pope's nephew, the Duke of Urbino. This so enraged the Duke that he murdered the Cardinal—an act which five years later cost him his duchy.

³ No important measure could be passed unless the parties were brought into temporary accord, and the most trifling appointments gave rise to violent party struggles.

previous year.¹ His fatuous schemes for the reduction of Pisa had diminished his influence. The party that had opposed his election continued hostile to him, and under the leadership of Alamano Salviati had become stronger.² But Soderini's chief danger lay in the returning power of the house of Medici. In 1508 the government had been afraid to punish severely Filippo Strozzi (one of the richest and most accomplished of the Florentine *jeunesse dorée*) for having married Clarice de' Medici, a daughter of Lorenzo, although the offence of marrying the sister of a rebel was considered a very grave one.³

At length, after much debate, Florence granted the King's request and, on September 1st, a schismatical Council was opened at Pisa. The Pope immediately laid Florence under an interdict, and appointed Cardinal de' Medici his legate, first at Perugia and then at Bologna. Florence thereupon reverted to her wavering policy. She endeavoured to persuade both king and cardinals to remove the Council elsewhere, or at least to stay its proceedings, and she refused to allow French soldiers to enter Pisa for its protection. It was meagrely attended and met with scant courtesy from the Pisans; so the King, yielding to Florentine pressure, on November 12th, sanctioned its translation to Milan.⁴ Florence had good grounds for alarm, as before the Pisan Council had broken up the Pope had formed an alliance with Spain and Venice for the expulsion of the French from Italy.⁵ If the League succeeded in its object, Florence would be isolated, but she would not quite desert her old ally. She continued to trim with the usual result. She sent 300 lances to aid the King of France, as she was bound by treaty to do, but she would do nothing more for him. For this the League regarded her as a stanch ally of the French, and hated her accordingly; while Louis, considering her help altogether inadequate, almost accused her of having betrayed him.⁶

¹ Villari's *Machiavelli*, i. 481.

² Its members were in the habit of meeting in the beautiful Rucellai gardens where many plans were concocted to harass the gonfalonier. Like Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici, Soderini appointed adherents of humble origin to important posts, and so incurred the ill-will of the young aristocrats.

³ He was fined 500 crowns and banished to Naples for three years, but the sentence must have been commuted, for he was back in Florence in December, 1510.

⁴ Creighton, v. 162. It met only on November 5th, 7th, and 12th.

⁵ This alliance was known as "The Holy League." Henry VIII. of England and the Emperor Maximilian subsequently joined it.

⁶ Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 7.

The year 1512 opened with a series of brilliant successes for the French troops, under their gallant young general, Gaston de Foix, but after his death at the battle of Ravenna, on April 11th, the tide of fortune swiftly turned, and before the end of June the French army had been driven across the Alps, and French supremacy in North Italy was at an end.¹ Representatives of the States forming the Holy League met at Mantua, and determined to reinstate the house of Sforza as lords of Milan, and to establish a government friendly to themselves in Florence. The first of these objects was easily effected, and, for the accomplishment of the second, they sent a Spanish army under Raimondo da Cardona (accompanied by Cardinal de' Medici and his brother Giuliano) into Florentine territory.² When the army reached Barberino, emissaries were sent from Florence to inquire what were the intentions of the League, and they were informed that Gonfalonier Soderini must be dismissed from office, that the Medici must be allowed to return as private citizens, and that Florence must pay 100,000 florins to Raimondo, or his army would continue to advance. Soderini summoned a meeting of the Greater Council, and offered to resign the gonfaloniership. He pointed out, however, not only that the Medici would never be contented to remain private citizens, but that their rule would be of a very different character to what it was before they were expelled; and he added (with an insight which in twenty years' time proved fatally prophetic) that Florence must expect a tyranny to which that of Lorenzo would be looked upon as a golden age.³ The Council unanimously replied, "We wish for you and not the Medici."⁴

The Florentines at once prepared for defence. A force of some 4,000 infantry, chiefly composed of Machiavelli's newly organised militia, was sent to Prato, where the first attack was expected.⁵ On August 28th Cardona encamped outside the town, and as he had no provisions for his army he offered to

¹ Cardinal de' Medici was taken prisoner at the battle of Ravenna but escaped.

² It was not a formidable army. Villari puts the infantry at 5,000 and Creighton at 8,000.

³ Filippo Neri, who heard the speech, vouches for the accuracy of the report of it given by Guicciardini. Napier (iv. 163-164) gives a translation of a part of it.

⁴ Creighton (vol. v. p. 180) gives Jacopo Guicciardini as his authority. Napier (vol. iv. p. 164), without citing his authority, gives a somewhat different version of the answer.

⁵ Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 12.

withdraw if the Florentines would send him 3,000 florins and 100 cartloads of bread, and undertake to recall the Medici. Soderini, who had been cajoled into the belief that the League were secretly hostile to the Medici,¹ and who had, moreover, an unwarranted confidence in the worth of the militia, refused the offer, and on August 28th Cardona, telling his starving troops that within the walls of Prato was food and plunder, ordered an assault. The garrison, which was composed chiefly of recently recruited militia, was quite unable to resist the violence of the onslaught, and before nightfall on the following day the town was taken by storm.²

The horrors of the sack which followed are without parallel in history. For twenty-one days no attempt seems to have been made by Cardona to control his savage, greedy, and licentious soldiery. Every building was pillaged. The defenceless inhabitants were chased from street to street and slaughtered as soon as overtaken. Neither youth, age, nor sex, neither the sanctity of place nor office were respected.³ Women and children were outraged in convents and in churches. Mothers threw their daughters into wells and jumped in after them, men cut their own throats, and girls flung themselves from balconies on to the paving-stones below to escape from violence and dishonour. It is said that 5,600 Pratans perished.⁴ Nor was this wholesale slaughter simple butchery, for numbers were burned or slowly tortured to death, in order to prolong the fiendish delight which their murderers derived from witnessing their sufferings. It was not till this devilry had lasted twelve days that Cardinal de' Medici allowed women to take refuge in his house, but in what plight they came may be imagined.⁵ "We may well believe the story that Pope Leo X. was haunted on his death-bed by the remembrance of the horrors wherewith the greatness of the Medicean family was again established."⁶

When the news of these atrocities reached Florence a panic set

¹ Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 8.

² August 29th is the date of the fall of Prato given by Modesti and Cardinal de' Medici (*Arch. Stor.*, i. 238; Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 13).

³ "Non perdonando al sesso mascolino e feminino, ne a monache sagrate in sodomitandole bruttamente." *Il Miserando Sacco dato alla Terra di Prato degli Spagnoli l'anno 1512, scritto per Jacopo Modesti* (*Arch. Stor.*, i. 242).

⁴ *Arch. Stor.*, i. 239, 260.

⁵ "Tali quali si possono imaginare" (*Ibid.*, 243).

⁶ Creighton, v. 181.

in, and she opened negotiations with Cardona,¹ but before terms had been settled, the government had been overturned by a *coup de main*. Some of the young nobles, who had held seditious meetings in the Rucellai gardens, forced their way into the gonfalonier's private rooms in the palace, and threatened his life if he would not immediately resign his office. Soderini, with that want of spirit which had been the bane of his career, did as he was required without even a show of resistance. A council meeting was at once convened and his deposition was formally decreed. He was sent, under the protection of an armed escort, to Siena, and thence he made his way to Castelnovo, which was then under the Turkish rule, where he took up his abode in order to be free from the machinations of Pope Julius, who had never forgiven him for having favoured the *Conciliabolo* (as he derisively called the Council of Pisa) and tried to get him into his power while in exile.

Florence was now compelled to accept much harder terms than those which she had previously refused. She undertook to allow the Medici to return, to rejoin the Holy League, to pay an indemnity of 150,000 florins, and to enter into an alliance with Spain.

¹ Michelangelo advised his family to fly from Florence (Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 231).

CHAPTER XXIII

1512-1523

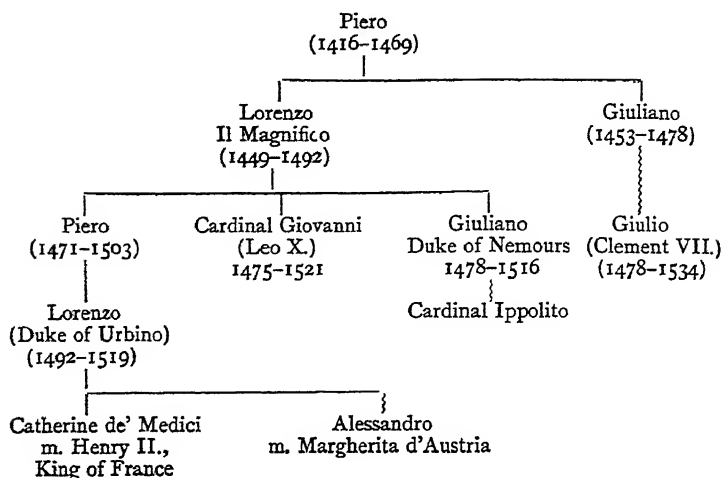
RETURN OF THE MEDICI—LEO X.—FLORENCE UNDER LORENZO
(DUKE OF URBINO) AND CARDINAL GIULIO DE' MEDICI—THE
ORTI ORICELLARI PLOT—CLEMENT VII.

ON September 1st, 1512, Giuliano de' Medici and his young nephew Lorenzo—two men of very opposite character, who have been immortalised by Michelangelo in the sacristy of San Lorenzo—entered Florence.¹ The popularity of the family had been only temporarily extinguished by Piero's misrule, and they were greeted on their arrival with shouts of "*Palle! Palle!*" The traditional enmity between the rival houses of Albizzi and Medici had died out, for they were welcomed by Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi, who lodged them in his house. Giuliano was one of the best of his race. He was possessed of the Medicean virtues without the Medicean guile. He was neither crafty nor ambitious. In many respects he resembled the uncle whose name he bore.² He was generous and gentle by nature; courteous and conciliatory in manner; averse to bloodshed and vice; accomplished, and an enthusiastic patron of Art and Letters. His father used to say of his three sons that one was foolish, one wise, and one good—epithets that respectively described Piero, Giovanni, and Giuliano with undeniable truth.

¹ Giuliano was afterwards created Duke of Nemours, and Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino. When the Medici were exiled in 1494, Giuliano took refuge at Urbino, where he was most kindly treated by the Duke. He assisted his brother Piero in his unsuccessful attempt to enter Florence in 1497, and he was imprisoned at Bologna by Pope Julius II. in 1510 (Litta).

² The Giuliano who was murdered in the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478.

MEDICI PEDIGREE. (TABLE IV.)



Giuliano had evidently no sinister intentions with regard to the government or his opponents.¹ He behaved as an ordinary citizen, he donned the Florentine *lucco*, and he shaved off his beard in conformity with Florentine fashion.² Nevertheless, he was looked upon as something more than a simple citizen by the Florentines, for he was invited to attend a *Pratica* at which constitutional changes were discussed.³ The only one of importance agreed upon, was that the gonfalonier should hold office for one year instead of for life, and with this Giuliano was contented.⁴ But this reform was far too moderate to satisfy the majority of the *Palleschi*, and when the Medici priests, Giovanni and Giulio (two future popes), arrived in Florence on September 14th,⁵ it was represented to them that Giuliano had been weakly acquiescent. Cardinal Giovanni was soon persuaded that more

¹ He is said by Jacopo Pitti to have entered Florence "con animo civilissimo" (*Arch. Stor.*, i. 103).

² The beard was regarded as a badge of the foreigner.

³ It is said that he was expressly acknowledged as head of the State (Roscoe's *Leo X.*, 1805, ed. ii. 145). Lorenzo, who represented the elder branch of the family, was probably set aside at first on account of his youth, and Giovanni, who was Giuliano's senior, on account of his profession.

⁴ Giovan Battista Ridolfi was appointed gonfalonier.

⁵ They were accompanied by Filippo Strozzi, who, with his usual caution, had been designedly keeping in the background until he saw which side was likely to win.

drastic changes were necessary. The *Palleschi* had certainly some ground for their contention, for it was obvious that Savonarola's constitution had proved a failure. The conduct of both foreign and home affairs had never been more feeble, nor the administration of justice more corrupt, than during the past few years. Citizens, who sought redress in the law courts for injuries, were frequently stabbed in the streets the next night. Judges pronounced iniquitous sentences to obtain the favour of courtesans, or were deterred from doing justice through fear of violence.¹

Accordingly, on September 16th, notwithstanding the law to the contrary which had been passed in 1495, a parliament was convened, at which a *Balia*, charged with the remodelling of the constitution, was appointed.² It was a repetition of the same solemn farce which had been so often witnessed. The Piazza was occupied by Spanish troops, and no one was elected to serve on the *Balia* whose name had not been previously approved by the Cardinal. The *Balia* at once abolished the *Consiglio Maggiore*, reduced the gonfalonier's term of office to two months, and established a constitution very similar to that which had existed in the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent.³ Nor were these changes forced on an unwilling people. There was no demonstration against the holding of the parliament which had been illegally summoned, no protest against the acts of the *Balia*, and after the Spaniards had left, the new government needed no support from foreign soldiery.⁴ The fact was that there was a widespread desire for a government strong enough to maintain order and enforce justice. Hence it was that the revolution was bloodless. Even those who disapproved of the present constitutional changes soon reconciled themselves to the return of the *ancien régime*.⁵ The Medici did not pursue the vindictive policy that usually characterised the return to power of a vanquished Florentine faction. Although they

¹ Cambi, cited by Trollope, iv. 344.

² It consisted of forty-five (or forty-eight) members, to which eleven were afterwards added. Its term of office was annually continued till 1527.

³ In the following year the *Settanta* was re-established, and the constitution became practically identical with that of Lorenzo's days. All laws passed since 1494 were repealed. Machiavelli's militia was abolished, but re-established in 1514 (Gino Capponi, iii. 125; Napier, iv. 202; Ammirato, vi. 295).

⁴ Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 23.

⁵ This is evident from the writings and conduct of Francesco Valori, Jacopo Nardi, Nerli, and Machiavelli; Creighton, v. 182; Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 22-24; Roscoe's *Leo X.*, ii. 142.

had been in exile for eighteen years there were no executions, proscriptions, or confiscations of property, and, with the exception of Gonfalonier Soderini and a few of his family, no banishments.

Among the supporters of the late government who declared their allegiance to the Medici was Niccolo Machiavelli. He had been dismissed from his post of secretary to the Ten on Soderini's flight, but he expressed his willingness to serve the new government. As his attachment to the ex-gonfalonier was well known it is unlikely that he would, under any circumstances, have obtained employment for a while, but an event occurred which relegated him to obscurity for many weary years. Two youthful fanatics of good family, Pietro Paolo Boscoli and Agostino Capponi, who had imbibed the doctrine promulgated by Cola Montana some forty years before that tyrannicide was "a worthy, laudable, and manly deed," resolved to assassinate Giuliano and Lorenzo de' Medici. They seem to have been actuated solely by a desire to emulate Brutus. No plan for the execution of the deed had been matured, nor had the two conspirators taken anyone else into their confidence, when Boscoli accidentally dropped from his pocket a compromising document containing a list of some eighteen persons, of whom Machiavelli was one, which was placed by the finder in the hands of the government. Boscoli and Capponi were arrested, and on the rack confessed their intentions, but asserted that none of the eighteen were acquainted with their design. All of those named in this list were nevertheless apprehended and tortured, and almost all confirmed the statement of the two conspirators. Boscoli and Capponi were executed on February 22nd, 1513,¹ some who were supposed to be implicated were banished, and others were set at liberty. Machiavelli was among those who were rightly held to be innocent, but the suspicion which had rested on him for only a few days blighted his career.

The discovery of this plot caused the Medici no anxiety, for they realised that it had not sprung from any widespread discontent. They resorted at once to the methods which Lorenzo the Magnificent had employed so successfully in making his rule

¹ Luca della Robbia (the great-nephew of the celebrated Luca) spent the night before their execution with the condemned men, and he has left a record of the interview. His account of Boscoli's mental anguish in his struggles to free himself from the doctrines of Pagan writers and regain a belief in Christianity before his death is very pathetic. Luca was himself a *Piagnone*, and deeply concerned respecting the spiritual welfare of his friend (*Arch. Stor.*, 1842, i. 283-309).

acceptable. The carnival festivities, which had been only tolerated by Savonarola as sombre handmaids of religion, were revived in all their pagan joyousness. Two companies of gay young Florentines were formed for the purpose of providing amusement for the people, under the leadership of Giuliano and Lorenzo—the one known as *Il Diamante* (the Diamond) and the other as *Il Bracone* (the big Branch).¹ Almost daily the citizens were thus enlivened with spectacles and pageants of various kinds.

The return of the Medici to their native city had brightened the prospects of the family, but Fortune had further favours in store for them. On Feb. 20th, 1513, Pope Julius II. died, and on March 11th Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici was elected as his successor. The Conclave did not readily arrive at this decision, as it was thought that Cardinal Giovanni, who was thirty-eight years of age, was too young.² His election was also at first opposed, on personal grounds, by Cardinal Soderini, but Giovanni de' Medici was clever enough to buy off his opposition with the promise of an amnesty to the ex-gonfalonier (the Cardinal's brother) and other members of his family who had been exiled.³ The new Pope assumed the title of Leo X., and the Cardinals (who were weary of the "furiousness" of his predecessor) joyfully observed that he had more of the characteristics of a lamb than of a lion.⁴ Florence was almost beside herself with joy, as no Florentine had ever before sat in St. Peter's chair. It is said that a Genoese, who was present at the festivities held in celebration of the event, remarked that Florence might be excused for congratulating herself on her first pope, but before she had had as many as Genoa she would find that a native pope was of questionable advantage to a free city.

Leo X., though more reputable than Alexander VI., and more peaceable than Julius II., was not behind either of them in his desire to help his relations. "The Pope and his Medici,"

¹ A Diamond and a Branch were the respective devices of Giuliano's and Lorenzo's fathers.

² Cardinals disliked electing a young pope, as it reduced their own chances of the papacy. It has been said that Leo X. partly owed his election to the fact that he was suffering from an incurable ulcer, and it was thought that, though young, he would be short-lived.

³ Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 28. Bernardo Dovizzi of Bibbiena effected the bargain. Raffaello Riario, who figured in the Pazzi conspiracy, was the candidate put forward by the senior cardinals, but he also was corruptly induced to retire (Roscoe's *Leo X.*, ii. 167-169).

⁴ According to one story he assumed the name of Leo because his mother, before his birth, dreamed that she had brought forth a lion.

wrote the Venetian ambassador, "have no other thought than of increasing the fortune of their house; and his nephews, unsatisfied with dukedoms, pretend that one of them ought to be a king."¹ He lost no time in making his cousin Giulio and his nephew Innocenzo Cibò cardinals, and in appointing his brother Giuliano Gonfalonier of the Papal Forces.² The latter appointment was probably made with a double object. The Pope not only desired the advancement of his brother, but his removal from Florence, the government of which he wished to see in the hands of one who was more fitted to further his own designs. Giuliano's new duties necessitated his residence in Rome; consequently young Lorenzo (whom the Venetian ambassador considered very little inferior in capacity and ambition to Cesare Borgia) became the virtual head of the Florentine Republic.³

Leo X. had already floating through his brain vast schemes for the aggrandisement of his family. At one time he contemplated consolidating the states of northern Italy into a principality for Lorenzo, and placing Giuliano on the throne of Naples. As steps towards these ends he conferred the lordships of Parma, Piacenza, and Modena (which he had purchased from the Duke of Milan and the Emperor) on his brother Giuliano, and, in contravention of Medicean traditions, he cultivated the friendship of France by effecting a matrimonial alliance between Giuliano and Filiberta of Savoy, the aunt of Francis I.⁴ The last step was taken in the hope of inducing the French king to aid in wresting the Neapolitan crown from Ferdinand and placing it on the head of his new relation. But Francis hesitated to embark on so dangerous an enterprise, whereupon Leo entered into an alliance with Ferdinand and the Emperor, who were opposing the French king's attempts to recover the duchy of Milan.⁵

¹ Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 236.

² Giulio was also made Archbishop of Florence, and the Pope made his friend Bernardo da Bibbiena a cardinal.

³ A paper of instructions as to how he was to carry on the government of Florence, ostensibly written by Giuliano, but really drawn up by the Pope, was left with him.

⁴ Louis XII. died on January 1st, 1515, and was succeeded by Francis I.

⁵ Lombardy was still the cockpit of Europe. In 1513 Louis XII. attacked Milan, but was driven out of Italy by the Swiss mercenaries of the young duke, aided by Ferdinand and Maximilian. Louis purchased the Pope's goodwill by dissolving the Council of Lyons and admitting that it was schismatical. On the death of Louis, Francis determined on another attempt to recover for France the duchy of Milan. It was in order to induce England to join this League that Leo created Wolsey a cardinal.

This move proved a disastrous one, and the Pope was compelled to conclude an inglorious peace.¹ The terms were finally settled at a conference which took place at Bologna on December 11th between the Pope and the King of France.

On his way to Bologna, Leo X., for the first time since his elevation to the papacy, visited his native city. He entered Florence on November 30th, and remained there three days. Landucci, who was present on the occasion, says that the grandeur and expense of the preparations for his reception were beyond description, and that no other city in the world would or could have done the like;² and Vasari writes that they were adjudged to be the most magnificent, as well as the most beautiful, that had ever been made at any time for the reception of any prince.³ Judging from the details given, it may well be believed that these were no idle boasts. More than a thousand workmen were employed continuously, working-days and festas, for more than a month before the Pope's arrival.⁴ Churches were converted into workshops, and "Divine service had to be performed in any remote corner that could be found. It was a strange way of showing honour to the head of the Christian Church."⁵ The streets and squares through which the Pope passed were adorned with triumphal arches, imitations of celebrated buildings, allegorical devices, and statues designed and executed by architects, painters, and sculptors whose reputation still lives. Antonio da San Gallo built an octagonal temple in the Piazza della Signoria, and Baccio Bandinelli made a colossal Hercules for the Loggia de' Lanzi. Triumphal arches were erected at the gate of San Pier Gattolini, between the Badia and the Bargello, and at the corner of the Bischieri, by Baccio da Montelupo, Granacci, and Rosso. And the unfinished façade of the Duomo was screened by a temporary wooden structure executed by Jacopo Sansovino from a design made by Lorenzo Il Magnifico, which was decorated in chiaro-oscuro by Andrea del Sarto. It is impossible to help lamenting that so much talent was expended on such ephemeral work.

When the Bologna conference was ended the Pope returned to Florence, and remained there from December 30th to February 19th. He took part in the carnival festivities, but

¹ It was then that Massimiliano Sforza, the Duke of Milan, renounced all claim to his duchy, and accepted a pension of 36,000 ducats from the King of France.

² Landucci, pp. 352, 353.

³ Vasari, iii. 201.

⁴ Landucci.

⁵ Creighton, v. 246.

this second visit did not increase his popularity with his fellow-citizens, as food was unusually dear, and they were disappointed that he took no steps for the importation of foreign grain.¹ On his departure he presented the chapter of the Cathedral with a jewelled mitre worth more than 10,000 ducats.

On March 17th, Giuliano de' Medici, who had been out of health for many months, died at Fiesole, to the grief of the Florentines, to whom he had greatly endeared himself.² By his death an obstacle was removed from the path of the Pope's ambition; for, remembering the kindness which he had received at the hands of Guidobaldo, Duke of Urbino, when an exile, Giuliano had thwarted the Pope's design to dispossess Francesco Maria, the present duke, of his duchy. Within a few days of his brother's decease the Pope summoned the Duke of Urbino to appear at Rome in person, on April 2nd, to answer certain charges, the chief of which was the murder of Cardinal Alidosi in 1511. The Duke having disregarded the mandate was excommunicated. On May 30th the papal troops entered Urbino, and on August 18th the Pope's nephew Lorenzo was created Duke of Urbino.

The new dignity thus conferred on the young *Capo della Repubblica* was of questionable advantage to his native city. It is true it necessitated his prolonged absence from Florence (which may not have been displeasing to her), but it involved her in a costly war, for Francesco Maria strove manfully, for many months, to regain his patrimony. The acquisition of a dukedom of a petty state for his nephew did not, however, satisfy Leo's ambition, and in 1518 he arranged a marriage between Lorenzo and Madeleine de la Tour, who was connected with Francis I. But the Pope's hopes of exalting his family in the person of his nephew were destined to be disappointed, for Lorenzo died in the following year.³ The Medicean supremacy in Florence did not, however, suffer by Lorenzo's death, as, had he lived, it is probable that there would soon have been another revolution. He had no doubt at first governed with discretion, and was careful not to arouse jealousy by ostentation in his dress, deportment, or mode of life;⁴ but before long, ignoring the

¹ Ammirato, v. 307.

² *Ibid.*

³ His young wife had died a few days before him in giving birth to a daughter, the famous Caterina de' Medici.

⁴ Pitti, p. 111. But even in 1516 the Venetian ambassador in Rome wrote that Lorenzo did many things of which the Florentines disapproved (*Calendar of State Papers (Venice)*, ii. 278.

sagacious counsel that had been given him by the Pope, he neglected public affairs, and after his marriage he wore a beard à la Français (a dire offence in the eyes of the Florentines), and he demanded from his fellow-citizens a ceremonious respect paid only to princes. It was commonly reported that he aspired to be the titular as well as the actual lord of Florence.¹

Cardinal Giulio de' Medici hastened to Florence and at once set about repairing the damage, which the unwisdom of Lorenzo's rule had occasioned to the prospects of his family. The prescriptive right of a Medici to govern Florence, in spite of the incompetence which some members of the family had displayed, seems to have been still tacitly acknowledged, for Giulio was allowed to assume the complete control of affairs without opposition, although he had no sort of authority to do so.² He could, however, unlike Piero and Piero's son, base his title to be virtual despot of the city on his personal fitness for the post—a ground which the practical-minded Florentines were ever ready to respect. During a five months' sojourn in Florence he reduced the finances to order, he lightened taxation, he reformed the administration of justice, and he restored to the elective bodies rights of which they had been deprived by Lorenzo. His task was not an easy one, for party spirit ran high.

The *Ottimati*, led by Piero Ridolfi, and the successors of the *Frateschi*, led by Jacopo Salviati, were alike discontented with the existing government, which was too republican for the one and too oligarchical for the other. Giulio did not identify himself with either party, but adroitly played off one against the other, and yet for a time contrived, while keeping the real governing power in his own hands, to satisfy both.³ It was generally believed that the Pope had abandoned all thoughts of retaining the virtual lordship of Florence in his family, owing to the difficulty of doing so during the long minority of Lorenzo's infant daughter Catherine (who was the only legitimate representative of the branch to which he belonged), and that a freer constitution was about to be granted to the city.⁴ At the request of the

¹ Ammirato, vi. 330; Gino Capponi, iii. 144; Napier, iv. 218. Francesco Vettori, however, gives a much more favourable account of his government (Symonds, i. 567-568).

² Perhaps he was looked upon as regent for the infant Catherine de' Medici.

³ Pitti, *Arch. Stor.*, i. 119.

⁴ Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 373. It was doubtless for this reason that the duchy of Urbino (except San Leo and the district of Sestino, which were handed over to Florence) was annexed to the papal states.

Cardinal, Machiavelli laid before the Pope a statement of his views as to the form of government best suited for Florence.¹ It is obvious that Machiavelli did not believe that either Pope or Cardinal, whatever may have been their intentions with regard to Catherine, would voluntarily relinquish any power that was in their hands; for he did not venture to suggest that the genuine republic which he advocated should be free from Medicean control during their lives. Giulio restored to the Florentines a certain measure of freedom, especially in those outward forms which they so dearly prized.² "It was the universal opinion that never since the city had been under the rule of the Medici had it been governed with greater appearance of civil liberty or more skilful concealment of despotism."³

When Giulio de' Medici quitted Florence in October he left, as his *locum tenens*, Silvio Passerini, Cardinal of Cortona, a man altogether unfit for the post, who "like most priests was very avaricious, and had not the intelligence to understand the Florentines, nor the judgment to please them had he understood them."⁴ Nevertheless he contrived to carry on the government without provoking any open disaffection until Giulio's return to Florence in two years' time.

Meanwhile events had taken place outside Florence which were to have a material effect on her history. Ferdinand and Maximilian were dead, and the sovereignty of Spain and the empire of Germany were united in the person of Charles V.⁵ Luther was denouncing the sale of indulgences and kindling a fire which was to set Europe in a blaze.⁶ And, what was to have a more immediate and direct bearing on Florentine affairs, on December 1st, 1521, Pope Leo X. died. His death was occasioned by a feverish chill; contracted when watching at an open window the public rejoicings at the news of the capture of Milan by the imperial and papal forces.⁷ It was very generally sup-

¹ "*Discorso sopra il Riformar lo Stato di Firenze. Fatto ad istanza di Papa Leone X.*"

² Pitti believed that both Leo X. and Clement VII. would have granted a freer constitution to Florence but for the avarice, ambition, and arrogance of the *Ottimati* (*Arch. Stor.*, 1842, vol. i. p. 131).

³ Nardi, ii. 64.

⁴ Varchi (1721), p. 7.

⁵ Charles was elected Emperor on June 28th, 1519.

⁶ Florence was connected with the scandal of the sale, for some of the profits had been granted by the Pope to his sister Maddalena de' Medici, the widow of Franceschetto Cibo.

⁷ The Pope had been induced by the promise of Parma, Piacenza, and Ferrara to desert his old ally Francis I. and to join Charles V. in another

posed that Cardinal de' Medici would succeed his cousin. Regarding the papacy in its political aspect (and hardly anyone regarded it otherwise), Giulio de' Medici, from his past training and reputation for administrative capacity, seemed well fitted for the post. But French influence in the Conclave was hostile to him, and his candidature was vehemently opposed by his personal enemy Cardinal Soderini, who insisted that the stain on his birth was an insuperable bar to his election. Many other names were proposed, and it was long before a decision could be arrived at. "There cannot be so much hatred or so many devils in hell as among the Cardinals," wrote the Spanish ambassador, while the election was pending.¹ And yet, strangely enough, the outcome of nine days' intriguing and counter-intriguing by men who were moved only by mundane considerations, was a choice at which the religious world could take no exception. On January 9th, 1522, Adrian of Utrecht, Cardinal of Tortosa, was elected Pope, and assumed the title of Adrian VI. He was a man of simple piety and frugal habits, unversed in the ways of the world, who owed his election solely to the fact that he had been tutor to Charles V. He had never been in Rome, he could not speak Italian, he had no sympathy with the Revival of Learning, and he despised Greek and Roman Art.² Probably there was not another member of the sacred college, so dissimilar in temperament and tastes to Leo X., as Adrian VI. Obviously Rome under the new pope was no place for Cardinal de' Medici, and he at once betook himself to Florence, where his presence was much needed. Discontent with the government had increased under Passerini's administration, and there was some disappointment that the expected reforms had not been introduced. Moreover there was danger without the walls of Florence. Cardinal Soderini was plotting the overthrow of the Medici, and as a step towards this end he had, with French assistance, organised two expeditions against Siena, which was then ruled by an ally of the Medici. Both of these were repulsed by the energy of Cardinal de' Medici, who hired bands of German and Swiss mercenaries, which he placed under the command of Guido Rangoni. Not

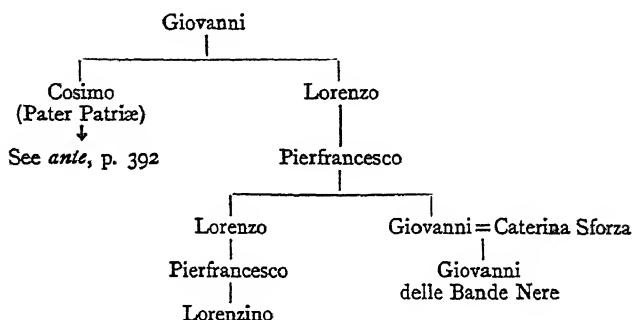
attempt to expel the French from Italy. Rumour (unsupported by evidence) said that he had been poisoned at the instance of Francis I. (*Ammirato*, vi. 338; *Gino Capponi*, iii. 152).

¹ Creighton, iv. 216. Cardinal Wolsey received seven votes, and he would probably have been elected if Charles V. had not played him false.

² He called the Laocoon a pagan idol (*Gino Capponi*, iii. 160).

long before he had purchased the goodwill of Francesco Maria, Duke of Urbino, by renouncing all claim to any part of his duchy, and appointing him captain-general of the Florentine forces. These appointments had given much offence to Giovanni de' Medici, more generally known as Giovanni delle Bande Nere,¹ a young *condottiere* of great promise, who felt that his relationship to the ruling Florentine family had been ignored. Probably it was on account of the long-standing jealousy between the two branches of the Medici family that he had been passed over by the Cardinal. And this jealousy was doubtless increased by the fact that there were now legitimate representatives of the latter but not of the former branch.

MEDICI PEDIGREE. (TABLE V.)



Florence under Giulio de' Medici was well governed and, on the whole, more contented than usual. He was courteous and conciliatory to all, and unfailing in his attention to public business. He understood the character of his fellow-citizens, and was careful not to offend their idiosyncrasies. He was well versed in Medicean policy and methods, but he had not the overmastering personality of Cosimo or the first Lorenzo which bore down, automatically as it were, much opposition and made governing, without appearing to govern, comparatively easy. Hence his endeavours to sustain the difficult part of pleasing both parties were not successful. Some of his supporters, fearing that he was about to reintroduce the *Consiglio Maggiore*, were becoming lukewarm in their attachment to him; and some of the opposition were becoming distrustful of his

¹ He was so called from the colour of the uniform of his troop. There is a splendid portrait of him by Titian in the Uffizi.

promise of a reformed constitution. This discontent was generally latent, but on one occasion it was on the point of finding dangerous expression. Once again sedition (fostered, no doubt unwittingly, by Machiavelli's brilliant dissertations) was bred in the beautiful gardens which Bernardo and Cosimo had laid out in the Via della Scala.¹ The young men who met here did not, as in the days of Gonfalonier Soderini, consist only of those who were hostile to the government. The larger number of them seem to have belonged to the Medicean party. They did not form a political society, though politics, treated philosophically, seem to have had a special interest for them. They were an assemblage of *litterati* (including all the first intellects of Florence) who met for the purposes of discussions and amusement. It was here that Giovanni Rucellai's "Rosmunda" was performed before Leo X. in 1515, and here Machiavelli read his discourses on "The Art of War" and "The Decades of Titus Livy." Luigi Alamanni the poet, Zanobi Buondelmonti, Jacopo da Diacceto, and other frequenters of the Orti Oricellarii, inspired it is said by Machiavelli's eloquent praise of the Roman Republic,² conspired with some enemies of the Medici in Rome (chief of whom was Cardinal Soderini) for the murder of Giulio de' Medici. The government must have suspected what was going on, for they arrested a messenger bearing treasonable correspondence, and immediately afterwards Jacopo da Diacceto was imprisoned. He confessed that it was the intention of the conspirators to kill Cardinal de' Medici, not from hatred towards him, but because they knew that he lied when he promised reforms. All who were suspected of being implicated in the plot were, at the Cardinal's desire, tried before a large and impartially constituted tribunal. Diacceto was beheaded, and others who had been apprehended were banished. Alamanni and Buondelmonti would doubtless have shared Diacceto's punishment, but they fled from Florence on hearing of his arrest. The plot occasioned the dissolution of the society that met in the Rucellai gardens.

Cardinal de' Medici did not allow this design on his life to

¹ Gino Capponi, iii. 156. The society seems to have been designated from its place of meeting the "Orti Oricellarii" (*Marietta de' Ricci*, 1853, i. 61).

² Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 328. Ammirato (vol. vi. p. 344) admits that Diacceto was actuated by a love of liberty, but alleges that the motive of Alamanni and Buondelmonti was private vengeance. There is no ground for supposing that Machiavelli was implicated in or even cognisant of the plot.

influence his policy. Whether he would have succeeded in maintaining his position for any length of time by temporising may be questioned. It answered, however, till the following year, when he was called to a higher sphere of action. On September 14th, 1523, Pope Adrian VI. died. The election of his successor was even a more lengthy proceeding than his own. Once more Giulio de' Medici's candidature was resolutely opposed by the French party on political grounds, and by Cardinals Colonna and Soderini from personal animosity. But the influence of Germany proved on this occasion stronger than that of France, and the two cardinals were not incorruptible.¹

After seven weeks' wrangling, intriguing, and bargaining, Cardinal de' Medici was elected pope. He took the title of Clement VII., signifying, it was said, his merciful intentions towards his enemies.² His experience of public affairs, his well-known caution, prudence, and moderation, and the success with which he had governed Florence, seemed to justify the choice of the sacred college, but in the light of after events a more disastrous selection could hardly have been made. Many worse men have sat in St. Peter's chair, but none more unfortunate.³ His elevation was not only calamitous to himself, but to Florence, Italy, and the Church.

¹ Cardinal de' Medici bribed Colonna and Soderini to support him—the one with the promise of the vice-chancellorship and the Riario Palace, and the other with an understanding that all his possessions (of which he had been deprived by Adrian VI. for treason) should be restored to him.

² Varchi, p. 4.

³ Ranke's *Popes of Rome* (1847), i. 86.

CHAPTER XXIV

1523-1529

RETURN AND EXPULSION OF IPPOLITO AND ALESSANDRO
DE' MEDICI—FLORENCE UNDER GONFALONIER NICCOLÒ CAPPONI

CLEMENT VII. was well aware that the Florentine government was in a dangerously unstable condition, and that as his personal control of affairs was no longer possible, some change was imperatively necessary. He accordingly consulted the ambassadors whom Florence had sent to congratulate him on his elevation, as well as two or three other Florentines of distinction who happened to be in Rome, as to what he should do. Ten of the thirteen whose opinion he asked expressed a desire for the maintenance of the Medicean supremacy, and advised him to send young Ippolito and Alessandro de' Medici to Florence, although both were bastards, as accredited representatives of the family, and to delegate the government during their minority to Cardinal Passerini. The other three strongly opposed Passerini's regency, and urged that the supreme power should be entrusted to a gonfalonier to be appointed from year to year, until Ippolito was old enough to rule and had shown himself fit to do so.¹ The Pope followed the advice of the majority, and sent Cardinal Passerini to Florence in May, 1524.

His decision proved disastrous, but it is difficult to see how he could have done otherwise. It was probably approved by the majority of Florentines, but there was no approach to unanimity among them as to the sort of government they desired. At no period in her history had Florence been less fit for self-government. Party spirit was fast destroying the last remnant of honest patriotism. Nor was there sufficient public

¹ *Sommario della Storia d'Italia dal 1511 al 1527* da Francesco Vettori, *Arch. Stor.*, Appendix 22, p. 349. Francesco Vettori was one of the three, and he says that the advice of the ten was given, not from conviction, but to please the Pope.

spirit even to keep the parties united. The *Palleschi* were split up into two factions, one desiring a Medici as president of a close oligarchy, and the other as hereditary chief of a constitutional government, and between these there was more bitterness and hatred than between the *Palleschi* and their opponents. Moreover, the anti-Medicean party contained discordant elements. Some of its members were actuated only by hatred of the house of Medici, and cared nothing for freedom, while others were republicans by conviction. There were also a great many citizens who were bent merely on gain or personal advancement.¹ Had the Pope constructed a truly representative government out of such materials it would not have lasted many months. Probably the best thing for Florence would have been to have made Giovanni delle Bande Nere virtual lord of Florence, but the Pope was not a man to take such a disinterested step, for Giovanni would have been independent of his influence.

Ippolito arrived in Florence on July 31st, 1524, and Alessandro in the following year.² Ippolito, although he was but fifteen years old, at once assumed the title of *Il Magnifico*, and was made a member of the *Balìa* and *Settanta*.³ He was a handsome youth of dubious parentage.⁴ He was taken in infancy from a foundling hospital by the Medici, and ever after treated by them as a member of the family. He is supposed to have been the son of Giuliano de' Medici (Duke of Nemours) and a lady of Urbino or Pesaro, but accounts differ as to whether his mother was a *gentil donna* or a *contadina*.⁵ It is said that she had more than one lover, and that it was not without hesitation that Giuliano acknowledged the child as his own.⁶ Alessandro was but thirteen years of age. Though the reputed son of Lorenzo (Duke of Urbino), it is generally believed that he was the son of Clement VII. His mother was a mulatto slave, and he had the dark skin, thick lips, and curly hair of a negro.⁷ For three years Cardinal Passerini ruled Florence, under the Pope's guidance, on behalf of these two youths, and contrived to maintain the constitution intact. But his rough manners gave great offence to his supporters and his rule occasioned so much

¹ Varchi, pp. 8, 9.

² Reumont's *Tavole, sub anno*. Varchi (p. 7) says that both arrived in August, 1524.

³ Varchi, p. 7.

⁴ His picture by Titian is in the Pitti.

⁵ Dennistoun (vol. ii. p. 52) says that her name was Pacifica Brandini.

⁶ Ammirato, vii. 9.

⁷ Gino Capponi, iii. 167.

discontent, that even in 1525 Florence was on the brink of a revolution. It was not, however, till 1527 that the storm burst.

Meanwhile the struggle for the suzerainty of Italy between Francis I. and Charles V. was being carried on more fiercely than ever. In April, 1524, the French were driven out of Milan, and in September, 1525, they were completely defeated at the battle of Pavia and Francis was taken prisoner. The Pope strove, by a systematic course of dissimulation, to keep clear of the contest, but his tortuous policy yielded only bitter fruit. In September, 1526, the Vatican was pillaged, and in May, 1527, the whole of Rome was sacked by the imperial troops. On the second occasion the Eternal City was for three days the scene of unimaginable horrors—a chastisement which was said to be at once the most cruel and the most deserved ever inflicted by heaven.¹ The Pope shut himself up in the castle of S. Angelo, but he was forced to surrender in June. On his liberation on December 6th he fled to Orvieto.

The brilliant young soldier, Giovanni delle Bande Nere, who commanded one division of the papal army, was mortally wounded, and died at Mantua on November 30th, 1526. Italy lost in him the only great general that she possessed. He was but twenty-nine years old, but his genius had impressed itself on his troop, for everyone who had served under him, even in a menial capacity, in time obtained military distinction.² Machiavelli thought that if Giovanni had been allowed a free hand Rome would have been saved.³ His courage in action and his power of enduring pain were extraordinary. After his leg had been shattered by a cannon-ball, the doctor informed him that it must be amputated that very night, and ordered two men to hold him. "I will have no one to hold me," he said, and he calmly held a candle while the operation was being performed. He left one son, who became the first Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Another eminent Florentine who nearly lost his life at this time was Filippo Strozzi, a scion of the great house from which the ill-fated Palla sprung. When the Spanish troops entered Rome in September, 1526, the Pope was forced to conclude a humiliating treaty, and (as no one placed any reliance on his word) he was required to give hostages for its performance. One of these was his intimate friend the rich banker, Filippo Strozzi, who had entered Florence with him after the sack of Prato. The

¹ Varchi, p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, p. 299.

³ Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 482.

first article of the treaty provided that he should pardon the Colonna, who had aided the Spanish in surprising Rome, but within two months of signing it he had razed fourteen of their strongholds to the ground. The Colonna pressed for Filippo's death, but the Emperor liberated him unconditionally.¹ The Pope's perfidy had, however, no little influence on Strozzi's career.

After the battle of Pavia Florence trembled for her safety. A new board of magistrates was appointed to superintend the repairing of the walls and the improvement of the fortifications, and Machiavelli, by the desire of the Pope, gave his mind to these matters. But Clement's continual interference with Machiavelli's schemes impeded their execution, and when the imperial forces entered Tuscany early in 1527 the works had hardly been commenced.² Florence was now in a desperate condition. She was quite unfit to resist an attack. She had been drained of money by the two Medici popes.³ Passerini's vexatious rule had made a revolution inevitable. A hostile and a friendly army were both devastating her territory, and Constable de Bourbon, who led the former, was hesitating whether to march on Florence or on Rome. She was, however, spared for a while the terrors of a siege as, on the approach of the army of the anti-imperial league under the Duke of Urbino to protect her, Bourbon made for Rome. But the arrival of this timely succour only hastened the crisis in her domestic affairs. A visit made on April 26th by Cardinal Passerini, accompanied by Ippolito and Alessandro, to the camp of the Duke of Urbino, gave rise to a rumour that the Medici had fled. The cry of *Popolo e Libertà* was raised in the streets, and some of the disaffected citizens took forcible possession of the Palazzo Vecchio. The Cardinal, who had received intelligence of what was taking place, returned immediately with a detachment of the Duke of Urbino's troops, and was preparing to storm the palace when Francesco Guicciardini (the historian) persuaded the rioters to capitulate.⁴ The

¹ It is said that Strozzi while in prison promised the Colonna that, if they would procure his release, he would stir up a revolution which should lead to the deposition of the Medici.

² The Pope, probably advised by Michelangelo, urged that San Miniato should be included in the fortifications, a proposal of which Machiavelli disapproved.

³ The wars of Leo X. had cost Florence 1,000,000 florins, and those of Clement VII., 900,000.

⁴ Francesco's brother, Luigi Guicciardini, who was gonfalonier, was shut up in the palace and supposed to be in sympathy with the rioters. Francesco

Cardinal was urged to inflict severe punishment on those who had taken part in the rising. "You have the doves in the dove-cot; wring their necks" was the advice given by one of the Duke of Urbino's captains.¹ But fortunately for the rioters, Passerini, who though overbearing was a timid man, feared to resort to extreme measures, and the ringleaders escaped with fines.² Possibly this would have been otherwise had the Pope not been preoccupied with his own more immediate affairs. The revolt had occurred without premeditation, and it had been quelled without bloodshed.³ Nevertheless its suppression occasioned a general gloom, which was not dispelled till May 12th, when the news of the capture of Rome and the captivity of the Pope arrived.⁴ Florence was perhaps the only city in Europe in which these tidings were subjects of rejoicing, but there the odium which Passerini had incurred was reflected on the Pope. The Cardinal was in fact the vicegerent, not of the two Medici boys, but of Clement, and those who desired a change of government saw in the Pope's discomfiture their own opportunity.

It was obvious that another attempt would be made to overturn the constitution, but neither those in authority nor their opponents were inclined for violence. The revolution which now took place was not instigated only by a desire for freedom.⁵ It was promoted, of course, by all anti-Mediceans (whether actuated by public spirit or private animus), but these were now aided by many of the *Ottimati* who had been alienated from their allegiance to the ruling family by Passerini's tactless conduct of affairs. This faction aimed at the establishment of an oligarchy. It was very influential, as it included many of the richest and most eminent citizens, of whom Niccolò Capponi was the chief, and he was soon recognised as the leader of the whole revolutionary party.⁶

There was, however, one of the *Ottimati*, whose mental and

incurred the odium of both sides for the part he played. Before the amnesty had been concluded the citizens threw tiles on the heads of the soldiers, one of which fell on Michelangelo's David and broke its left arm (Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 498, note).

¹ Varchi, p. 42.

² Those who took part in the riot were called by the supporters of the government *Piagnoni*, but many of them did not hold Savonarola's views.

³ Varchi, p. 42.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45. Ammirato (vol. vii. p. 35) gives May 11th.

⁵ Napier, iv. 286.

⁶ This faction also included Jacopo Salviati, Francesco Vettori, Matteo Strozzi, and Luigi Guicciardini.

personal gifts, coupled with a colossal fortune and aristocratic connections, made him the most distinguished member of his party, who had not as yet declared for either side. This was Filippo Strozzi, who was connected by marriage with the two opposite parties, for his wife was a Medici and his sister had married Niccolò Capponi. He had not hitherto taken the leading part in public affairs to which his position entitled him. Though not without ambition, he loved pleasure more than power, and moreover he was essentially cautious, if not timid, by nature.¹ Possibly he was drawn in opposite directions by inclination and prudence, for the treatment which the Strozzi, past and present, had experienced at the hands of the Medici, deserved anything but affection, and yet he knew (as his sage grandmother Alessandra had pointed out) that "the Medici were always on the winning side." He had just escaped from Rome, and he was now at Pisa where he received despatches almost simultaneously from Cardinal Passerini and Niccolò Capponi, urging him to come post-haste to Florence. The Cardinal's troops (which were quite sufficient to maintain his position if he had had the nerve to use them) were clamouring for pay, and as he was too avaricious to quiet them out of his own ample resources, he sent for Filippo Strozzi, who practically controlled the Florentine Treasury.² Although Strozzi's life had been almost sacrificed through the Pope's treachery, he could not even now determine on a decided course of action.³ So he sent his wife Clarice to Florence to report to him how matters stood. She was a high-spirited woman "gifted with a wonderful power of tongue," which she used freely.⁴ Had her husband possessed her courage his career would probably have been more honourable. She hated, with undisguised hatred, the present government of Florence, although it was nominally Medicean, for, as Ippolito, Alessandro, and the Pope were all base-born, she would not acknowledge them as representatives of her family.

On her arrival in Florence the Cardinal gave her audience with much ceremony and respect, in the Casa Medici, but if he expected aid from the Strozzi his mind was soon disabused.

¹ His private morals were infamous. "To him in a great measure may be attributed the corruption of the Florentine aristocracy in the sixteenth century" (Symonds, i. 262).

² Varchi, p. 47.

³ He was also disappointed that the Pope would not make his eldest son Piero a cardinal.

⁴ Segni's *Storie Fiorentine*, cited by Trollope, iv. 445.

She rated him for his misgovernment, and told the two Medic youths that if the people desired them to leave Florence it was their duty to go. The Cardinal frequently endeavoured to excuse himself, but she would not brook any interruption, and repeated over and over again the same words.¹

On the following day Filippo arrived in Florence and waited on the Cardinal, though he was with difficulty persuaded to do so, as he suspected foul play. He had heard from his wife what had taken place, but he affected complete ignorance and listened complacently while Ippolito, after complaining bitterly of Clarice's conduct, implored him to undo the mischief which she had done. Filippo professed the utmost regret for his wife's behaviour, and assuring Ippolito that "had she not been a Medici he would have made her suffer for it," promised that he would do all in his power to help him.² He then repaired to the Palazzo, where he found that at a large meeting of magistrates, specially convened for the purpose,³ some fundamental changes in the constitution had been resolved upon, and the deposition of the Medici had been practically decreed. There was nothing vindictive in these proceedings. Ippolito, Alessandro, and Caterina de' Medici were declared Florentine citizens, with liberty to reside in Florence or to depart, as they thought fit, and the Medici family were henceforth exempted from all taxation except the *decima*. This decree at first occasioned general satisfaction, but before long it was deemed insufficient, and Filippo Strozzi was deputed to inform the two young Medici and the Cardinal that their departure from the city would be agreeable to the people.⁴ He endeavoured to persuade them that it was for their interest to go, but as they hesitated to follow his advice he once again made use of his wife's more potent tongue. "Clarice," he said, "it would be well if they left immediately, and it is for you to make them go in whatever way you think best." The lady was well fitted for the part she was called upon to play. Carrying herself like a man, and with an air of contempt, she entered the adjoining room, where the two youths were consulting with the Cardinal, and raising her voice so that her husband and his friends might hear her words, she expatiated on the difference between the present system of government and that of her ancestors, and she insinuated

¹ Varchi, p. 46.

² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

³ A *Pratica* (Varchi, p. 48).

⁴ Segni, p. 7.

pretty plainly that the misfortunes which had overtaken her two kinsmen and the Pope disclosed the stain upon their birth. "Be-gone," she concluded, "from a house and a country to the possession of which you have no title either by descent or personal fitness. Leave at once, or I will be the first to oust you from the position which you now hold."¹

The Cardinal and the boys succumbed before this torrent of words, and consented to leave the city. On the following morning (May 17th, 1527) they left the city, escorted by Filippo Strozzi, Niccolò Capponi, and Francesco Vettori. Filippo was instructed not to part from Ippolito until satisfied that the officers in command of the garrisons at Pisa and Leghorn would recognise the new government. For this purpose he took the lad to Pisa, but before the fortress had been delivered up Ippolito effected his escape. It was suspected that Filippo had connived at Ippolito's flight, and his popularity was greatly diminished in consequence.² Moreover the distrust with which he was regarded on his return was increased by his wife's conduct during his absence. She had taken up her abode in the Casa Medici (Palazzo Riccardi), which was thronged with the *Ottimati*, and it was surmised (probably with reason) that she was intriguing for a political ascendancy on behalf of her husband and sons. Filippo, however, was not made of the stuff to fit him for any such schemes, and before long he withdrew to his villa at La Selve, and ultimately removed to Lyons.³

No sooner had the two young Medici departed than another act in the drama of which Florence had for centuries been the stage was played. Once more the constitution was reconstructed. There were the same attempts by elaborate electoral contrivances to save the republic from shipwreck on the rocks of faction, as had been made on so many previous occasions with the same disastrous failure. Old councils were abolished and new ones were created, or those which had already been tried and found wanting were revived under new names; and the modes of appointment and terms of office of their members were altered, but all in vain. A provisional government (*Consiglio degli Scelti*) was constituted, almost on the instant, to reconstruct the government,

¹ Segni, p. 8.

² Gino Capponi, iii. 213. Scandal suggested a very ugly explanation of the incident (Segni, p. 13).

³ Niccolò Capponi ordered the Strozzi to leave the Casa Medici in order to recover his popularity, which had suffered from his visits to them.

and in a surprisingly short time a constitution, very similar to that which had been established under Savonarola's auspices, was in working order.¹ The *Consiglio Maggiore* was revived, and held its first meeting on May 21st, and on May 31st Niccolò Capponi was elected gonfalonier for the term of thirteen months.² The new constitution was not popular from the outset as, notwithstanding its democratic appearance, it was obvious that the *Ottimati* had contrived to secure for themselves a preponderating influence. The people made no secret of their fear that they were about to be oppressed by three hundred tyrants instead of one, for they knew that the *Ottimati* were greedy of power, unscrupulous and avaricious.³ Party spirit was as rancorous, and factions as numerous, as in the days of Savonarola. The *Ottimati* were generally supported by the *Palleschi* and invariably opposed by the *Popolani*, whom they called in derision *Poveri*, *Plebe*, or *Ciampi*. The most prominent members of the *Popolani* were Baldassare Carducci, Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi, and Tommaso Soderini. Two other factions, also hostile to the *Ottimati*, were the *Adirati* and the *Arrabbiati*—the former comprising those who were provoked at Niccolò Capponi's moderation; and the latter, those who were enraged with the Medici. The *Arrabbiati*, led by Dante da Castiglione, pulled down the Medici arms from the public buildings and destroyed waxen effigies of the Medici in the church of the Annunziata—an insult to his family which Clement VII. did not forget. The *Neutrali*, as may be inferred from their name, sometimes espoused one side and sometimes the other. "It is well-nigh impossible," wrote Varchi, "that a state, so disorganised and thoroughly corrupt as Florence then was, should produce men of parts and character, but if by chance any such should arise they would be hated and persecuted, their dispositions would be soured by indignation, or they would be hunted from their country or die of grief."⁴

Such was the social condition of Florence when Niccolò Capponi was gonfalonier, and the treatment which he received at the hands of his countrymen goes far to justify Varchi's remarks. He was probably honest, capable, and as fit a man for the

¹ The *Ottanta* was re-established and the *Otto di Pratica* was superseded by the *Dieci della Pace e Libertà*, the name of which was changed to the *Dieci della Guerra* (Varchi, p. 53).

² Varchi, pp. 54, 63.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 51; Pitti, i. 131.

⁴ Varchi, p. 73. Varchi's sympathies were democratic, which adds weight to this opinion. He is generally very impartial,

post as could be found, but circumstances were too strong for him. He set himself with energy to improve public and private morality. He endeavoured to purify the administration of justice by enlarging the jurisdiction of a tribunal called the *Quarantia*.¹ Laws were passed through his instrumentality to put down gambling, usury, and extravagance in dress, for the regulation of taverns, and for the punishment of what was unequivocally vicious. He instituted a new system of taxation (not very dissimilar from the old *catasto*), and appointed new tax commissioners who came to be known as *Tribolanti* (Tormentors). Reforms such as these naturally produced irritation in a corrupt community, and Capponi's popularity suffered.² He was not, however, content with endeavouring to achieve his ends by legislation, but he called to his aid religion, and though in doing so he incurred no little ridicule, he strengthened his position. His action in this behalf, it must be admitted, was fantastic, but before it is described the circumstances under which it took place must be mentioned.

There was a terrible outbreak of plague in Florence—as terrible, it is said, as the visitations of 1348 and 1478. It had made its appearance in 1522, but it did not become very infectious till 1527. In that year, however, it was so virulent that from 300 to 400 died from it every day for the space of three months, and, according to another account, there were no less than 40,000 deaths in the month of November alone.³ “Our Florence,” wrote Machiavelli, who witnessed its condition, “is like a town which has been sacked by infidels. Its streets, once so clean and beautiful and the resort of rank and fashion, are reeking with filth, and so crowded with wretches crying piteously or importuning for aid, that to walk in them is difficult and alarming. Shops are shut, work has ceased, courts of justice are gone, law is powerless, theft and murder are rife. The squares and markets, once thronged with citizens, are now graveyards or dens of thieves. Men walk alone and there are no more friendly greetings, only meetings between the plague-stricken. Kinsman shuns kinsman; brother, brother; the wife, her husband; and worse still, fathers and mothers abandon their little ones.”⁴

When Florence was in this state of abject misery, Capponi, in the course of an oration to the Greater Council, on the ills which

¹ It seems to have existed in 1508, but Varchi and Segni both attribute its establishment to Capponi (Napier, iv. 329).

² Segni, p. 19.

³ Cambi, cited by Trollope, iv. 471.

⁴ *Opere di Niccolò Machiavelli* (1823), v. 36.

she was suffering, flung himself on his knees crying, "*Misericordia, Misericordia*," and all the assembly followed his example. After repeating almost verbatim one of Savonarola's predictions, he persuaded the Greater Council to publicly acknowledge Jesus Christ as the King of Florence, and an inscription recording the fact was ordered to be placed over the principal door of the palace.¹ This act of Capponi's was by some set down to hypocrisy, and said to have been a merely political move.² Very possibly he was sensible of the advantages he would gain by conciliating those of the *Popolani* who still called themselves *Frateschi*, for he had, by force of circumstances, been driven into closer relations with the *Palleschi* than he desired, but there is no reason to doubt his sincerity. Savonarola, it may be remembered, had made the same proclamation. Capponi could not have passed his resolution under ordinary circumstances. The Florentines were at this time depressed by suffering and consequently penitent, but this would not have sufficed had not the memory of Savonarola still swayed the popular imagination.³

Unfortunately for his country, Capponi was not so successful in persuading the government over which he presided to adopt his views on foreign as on domestic policy. He saw clearly that a reconciliation between the Pope and the Emperor was at hand, and he realised the danger to Florence that this portended. It was certain that Clement would attempt to re-establish his family in their old position, and Clement with Charles V. as his ally would indeed be a formidable foe. When therefore an offer was made to Florence by the Emperor that if she would aid him in his struggle with France, or at least remain neutral, he would undertake to defend her, Niccolò Capponi used all his eloquence to induce the government to accept it. But the traditional attachment to France, which had been so baneful to Florence in the past, was destined to bring on her still greater evils. A large share of responsibility in this matter must be laid at Savonarola's door. He it was who encouraged the Florentines in their old folly of leaning on a bruised reed, and their present

¹ This occurred on February 9th, 1528. Varchi (p. 122) and Segni in his *Vita di Niccolò Capponi* (1723), p. 19, give the inscription in different words, neither of which correspond with those on a marble tablet which is now inserted in the parapet of the tower (Horner, i. 224).

² Pitti, p. 152; Sismondi, x. 62. Rastrelli calls it *atto di fina politica* (see Trollope, iv. 484).

³ Symonds' *Sketches and Studies in Italy* (1879), p. 168.

confidence in France was in a great measure due to their belief in his prophecies.¹ Had he been gifted with the insight of Isaiah he would have seen that the strength of Charles VIII. and Francis I. was to be the Florentines' shame, and their trust in the shadow of France their confusion. A poetical conceit which Savonarola condescended to use—

“Gigli con gigli dover fiorire”²—

was converted by Alfonso Strozzi and Tommaso Soderini into a platform cry, and it worked like magic on the people. Not only was Capponi's counsel rejected, but Florence joined the anti-imperial league and her doom was thereby sealed.³

In June, 1528, Niccolò Capponi's term of office came to an end, and there was much opposition to his re-election. Many of the *Libertini* (as the *Popolani* were now called), whose disorderly conduct he had sought to repress, and all of the *Arrabbiati*, coalesced against him. The hostility of the latter party towards him had increased with a growing belief that he was secretly in league with the Pope.⁴ His opponents also included a small but very dangerous section, consisting of secret adherents of the Medici, who, believing that Capponi did not sympathise with their aims, worked with the *Libertini* for the purpose of aiding in his overthrow. Chief among these were Baccio and his nephews Francesco and Filippo Valori. Capponi's supporters included all the *Palleschi* and such of the *Frateschi* as had been won over to his side by his emulation of Savonarola in the preceding February.⁵ His most formidable opponent for the gonfaloniership was Baldassare Carducci, a man of ability but of humble origin, and unscrupulous in his efforts to gain popularity. Carducci's hatred of the house of Medici was well known, and his attempts to conciliate the *Palleschi* on the present occasion were so patently insincere that they injured his prospects. He also suffered from *trop de zèle* on the part of some of his followers. Pierfilippo Pandolfini secretly printed at Siena an electioneering squib in which Capponi was vilified in such scurrilous terms that it over-shot the mark and created disgust.⁶ The result of these conflict-

¹ Symonds, i. 472.

² Segni, p. 16. “Lily with lily must always flourish.”

³ The league was between France, England, Venice, and Ferrara.

⁴ The Pope had regained his liberty and was gradually regaining his power.

⁵ Segni, p. 31. Capponi's party were called by their opponents the *Parte dei pochi* (Gino Capponi, iii. 225).

⁶ Napier, iv. 341.

ing forces was that, in an assembly of 1944, Capponi received fourteen more votes than Carducci and was re-elected gonfalonier.¹

It would have been better for him, perhaps, had he been defeated, nor would his country have suffered, for, while he may be credited with an honest desire for her welfare, he was powerless to save her. The dangers which he had foreseen were increasing, and were now very nigh at hand. The French had been driven from Genoa by Filippino Doria, and from Naples by the Prince of Orange; and Clement VII., after recovering Rimini and Imola, was once more in Rome. The Florentine *Bande Nere*, who had been aiding Francis I., were nearly exterminated. And, worst of all, a rumour arose (which the Florentines refused at first to credit) that a *rapprochement* was taking place between the Pope and the Emperor. Florence now commenced preparations to resist an attack. She appointed Ercole d'Este commander of her army, she required all citizens between the ages of eighteen and fifty to enrol themselves in a National Guard, and she raised a large sum of money by a forced loan.² But she did not even yet fully realise the extent of her peril. The proposal to establish a National Guard met with the most factious opposition from the *Popolani*, who alleged that it was a trick on the part of the *Palleschi* to reinstate the Medici, and young Jacopo Alamanni endeavoured to prevent its establishment by force. But the populace did not respond to his appeal, and he was arrested and executed. Nevertheless, the opposition to the government grew more pronounced. The younger democrats, of whom Pierfilippo Pandolfini was the leader, formed themselves into a society called the *Fideli*, and the government failed in an attempt to have them convicted of sedition. Meanwhile Capponi steadily pursued his policy of endeavouring to conciliate the Pope, and the suspicion that he was playing a double game gained ground.³ The betrothal of one of his sons to a daughter of Francesco Guicciardini, who was a stanch supporter of the Medici, coupled with his political relations with the *Palleschi*, strengthened this suspicion. The frequency with which he summoned meetings of influential citizens who were not in office (*Richiesti*), to confer with them on affairs of state, also

¹ Varchi, p. 152. ² It was arbitrarily levied on a few rich families.

³ His enemies alleged that seeing the restoration of the Medici inevitable, he was endeavouring to provide for his own safety by arranging a marriage between his eldest son and Catherine de Medici, and obtaining a cardinal's hat for a younger son.

gave offence. This was an old Florentine custom, but he made an unprecedented use of it, and the office-holders felt that their influence was being undermined. Moreover, most of the citizens whom he convened for consultation were *Palleschi*.¹ So strong was the opposition which Capponi's conduct in these matters provoked that he was forbidden to correspond with the Pope, and a law was passed curtailing a gonfalonier's power to summon meetings of the *Richiesti*. Capponi resented these proceedings with indignation, and resigned the gonfaloniership, but the Greater Council would not accept his resignation.² His downfall, however, was not long delayed.

On April 16th, 1529, a letter that had been written to Capponi by Giachinotto Serragli (agent of the Pope's secretary and a connection of Jacopo Salviati) was found by Jacopo Gherardi in one of the passages of the Palazzo. The letter was written in cipher, and, though on the face of it suspicious, was not necessarily compromising. After a reference to the Pope's intentions with regard to Florence, it contained a request that Capponi's son Piero should meet the writer, at some place outside the Florentine territory, for the purpose of discussing important matters.³ Jacopo Gherardi, who was one of Capponi's fiercest foes, happened to be *proposto* for the day,⁴ and after consultation with his own supporters he hastily convened a meeting of the *Ottanta* to whom he read the letter, which he characterised as manifestly treasonable. Capponi was forthwith arrested and brought before the assembly. When charged, his manner was confused; and in his desire to exculpate his son, he seemed to accuse himself. His defence was feeble and did not create a favourable impression on his friends. Many of those present desired that he should then and there be thrown from the palace windows. Gherardi, who had filled the palace with his own adherents, and ordered the executioner to be in attendance, twice moved that Capponi should be beheaded, and twice his proposal was rejected. He then put the question a third time, and, drawing his dagger, cried

¹ Among others Francesco Guicciardini, Francesco Vettori, and Matteo Strozzi were very obnoxious to the *Libertini*.

² Varchi, p. 193; Segni, p. 58.

³ The accounts of this incident differ materially. I have followed that of Niccolò's distinguished descendant Gino Capponi at p. 227 of vol. iii. of his *History*. But see Varchi, p. 197; Segni, p. 59; Nardi, ii. 147; Pitti, p. 173; and Segni's *Vita di Niccolò Capponi* (1723), p. 31.

⁴ This gave him the right of moving resolutions.

out, "This shall carry the motion," whereupon Lorenzo Berardi, a spirited young friend of the gonfalonier's, also drew his dagger and exclaimed, "And this shall defeat the motion."¹ The iniquitous proposal was rejected, but the meeting, without further inquiry, deprived Capponi of his office. Francesco Carducci was appointed gonfalonier in his stead and, although one of his opponents, he took precautions that Capponi should have a fair trial.²

Accordingly, on the following day, Niccolò Capponi was brought before a legally constituted tribunal on a charge of treason. He now defended himself with spirit and dignity. Gherardi first moved that he should be put to the torture, and then that he should be banished for two years, but both motions were defeated. His third motion, however, that Capponi should not be allowed to leave Florentine territory for six months, he succeeded in carrying. This practically amounted to an acquittal, and the ex-gonfalonier, as he left the court, received a popular ovation.

Opinions differ as to Capponi's integrity. Pitti says that he plotted for the destruction of the republic in order to benefit himself,³ but the more general and the better opinion seems to be that he was honest and patriotic. His conciliatory attitude towards the *Palleschi* was more probably the result of a desire to protect them from persecution than of sympathy with their views. They were the minority, and the majority harassed them both by excessive taxation and attempts to exclude them from office.⁴ Capponi strove to give them fair play in order that the government might be truly representative. He endeavoured to harmonise the jarring elements of political life in Florence—a task altogether beyond his power. Neither the Pope nor his intimate friends, the Vallori, believed in Capponi's attachment to the Medici cause. When Clement was informed of the protection which Capponi afforded the *Palleschi* he remarked, "That is precisely our misfortune."⁵ His correspondence with the Pope, although from an official point of view clandestine, was carried on with the knowledge and approval of some of the most influential citizens, among others Tommaso Soderini, whose

¹ Segni's *Vita di Niccolò Capponi*, p. 33.

² Pitti, p. 177. Probably the choice would have fallen on Francesco's relative Baldassare, but Niccolò Capponi (following Medicean methods) had sent him on an embassy to France.

³ Pitti, p. 173.

⁴ Segni, p. 19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

hostility to the Medici is unquestionable. The Republic was indeed at this time in danger of subversion, not from Capponi's ambition but from Clement's animosity—a danger which Capponi, wiser than his countrymen, foresaw, and endeavoured, behind their backs, to avert.

The new gonfalonier's home policy was on much the same lines as that of his predecessor. He at once introduced fiscal and social reforms. But the attention of the government was soon concentrated on foreign affairs. On June 29th, 1529, a treaty was signed between the Pope and the Emperor at Barcelona, and most of the Florentines now began to appreciate their danger. This treaty was unexpectedly favourable to Clement. Charles seems to have had qualms of conscience about the treatment which the Pope had experienced at his hands, and by way of expiation he undertook to re-establish the house of Medici in Florence, and to give his natural daughter Margaret in marriage to young Alessandro de' Medici.¹ Florence was in truth by this treaty "paid as compensation to the Pope for the insults which he had received at the hands of the Emperor when Rome was sacked."² A few days before its execution the French army had been annihilated at Landriano near Milan, nevertheless there were still some Florentines so blind as to look to Francis I. for help, but even their eyes were opened when the news arrived in August of *Le Traité des Dames*.³ By this treaty Francis disgracefully abandoned all who had stood by him in his adversity, and every shred of that honour, which he boastfully claimed to have saved at Pavia, he lost at Cambrai.

¹ Segni, p. 71. Alessandro was the only lay representative of the family, as Ippolito had been made a cardinal in the previous month.

² Symonds, i. 261.

³ The treaty was so called because Louisa of Savoy acted as agent for the King of France, and Margaret of Austria as agent for the Emperor. It was executed at Cambrai on August 5th.

CHAPTER XXV

1529-1530

THE SIEGE OF FLORENCE

THE new gonfalonier made strenuous efforts to prepare for a siege. He was a thoroughgoing democrat, but he was a patriot before all things, and, seeing that the only chance of salvation for Florence lay in unity, he endeavoured to conciliate the *Ottimati*. He had, however, neither the ability nor the qualifications to pursue such a policy with effect.¹ Inferior to Piero Soderini and Niccolò Capponi (who had both failed in a like task), he was beset with even greater difficulties. The disease, which had so often enervated and sometimes paralysed the members of the Florentine body politic, was now attacking more vital parts, for even with an enemy at her gates her citizens could not rise superior to party spirit or class jealousies.² Carducci was despised by the nobles because of his humble birth, and by the rich traders because he had been twice a bankrupt.³ Some of his supporters suspected him because he was not an out-and-out partisan, and it is even said that his integrity was doubted because he was poor!⁴ The party that opposed him was numerous, and it comprised men of all shades. The *Palleschi*, most of whom were rich and influential,⁵ were almost to a man hostile to him. Small traders who dreaded the loss which a protracted siege would entail, needy citizens who hoped that a change of government would bring them a change of fortune, and many of the very lowest class (*Non-Statuali*)⁶ who loved the gay life and spectacles which Florence had enjoyed under the Medici, all desired to come to terms with

¹ Most of the *Ottimati* preferred the supremacy of the Medici to that of Carducci's party (the *Ostinati*).

² Nerli, pp. 188, 189.

³ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 410.

⁴ Gino Capponi, iii. 246.

⁵ Nerli, p. 192.

⁶ The *Non-Statuali* were too poor to obtain the franchise.

the Pope, although they did not all venture to express their opinions openly.¹ Carducci's followers were, however, in a majority. The bulk of the *Non-Statuali* supported him, as he had shown a disposition to improve their political status. But it was the *Frateschi*, still inspired by the memory of Savonarola, who formed the backbone of his party,² and it was their enthusiasm which enabled him to pursue a policy of uncompromising resistance to Clement. All that was left of that tremendous energy, which had carried Florence safely through so many vicissitudes, was concentrated in them, and now, like an expiring flame, it flared up in the socket, and made her dying struggle for independence almost worthy of her glorious past.³ Carducci persuaded the *Consiglio Maggiore* to proclaim a general pardon to recent political offenders, and a law to that effect was passed on June 28th. By the same act all citizens were required to publicly record their allegiance to the Republic. This conciliatory measure had, however, but little effect, and almost every step which was taken for the defence of the city was impeded by the prevailing disunion.⁴

Michelangelo who, in the previous April, had been appointed one of the *Nove della Milizia*—a board which not only controlled the burgher troops, but had charge of the walls, towers, and bastions of Florence, was entrusted with the all-important work of putting the city in a thorough state of defence.⁵ Although no better man could have been found for the post, his appointment was an offence to the aristocracy.⁶ Under his supervision bastions were erected outside every gate, and the walls, where weak, were strengthened with embankments.⁷ But he devoted most attention to fortifying the hill on which the beautiful church of S. Miniato stands, for he regarded it as the key of the town.⁸ Twice he was hindered in the execution of these works, either by the ignorance, the jealousy, or the treachery of those in authority. In June he was ordered to Pisa, ostensibly to superintend the strengthening of its defences, and in July to Ferrara to study the fortifications of that city, which were re-

¹ Napier, iv. 397, 399.

² Symonds, i. 260.

³ Nardi, ii. 166.

⁴ Pitti, p. 183; Nerli, p. 189.

⁵ The patent of his appointment is dated April 6th, 1529.

⁶ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 411.

⁷ Ammirato, vii. 50.

⁸ Much difference of opinion existed as to the expediency of fortifying this hill. Michelangelo's plan was now opposed by Niccolò Capponi, as it had previously been by Machiavelli.

nowned throughout Italy. He returned to Florence in August, and the fortifications were continued under his direction *con grandissima celerità*.¹ Within two months the city was ready to resist an assault.

A forced loan of 80,000 florins was raised, and all arrears of taxation were rigidly exacted.² The harvest, which was unusually abundant, was ordered to be stored in Florence and some of the neighbouring towns, but the direction was only imperfectly executed. The Madonna dell' Impruneta was brought with much ceremony to Florence and placed in the Cathedral; and a Board of Seven, endowed with almost dictatorial powers, was appointed to watch over the safety of the city, but its members held such discordant opinions that it was practically useless.³ The most disastrous of all the defensive measures that were taken was, however, the appointment of the arch-traitor Malatesta Baglioni to the chief command of the Florentine forces.⁴ The expediency of this selection was questioned by many, but it was thought that his supposed desire to avenge the death of his father (who had been put to death by Leo X.), and to protect his own patrimony of Perugia, would ensure his fidelity.⁵ Stefano Colonna was, about the same time, made captain of the militia, and the hill of San Miniato was placed under his charge.⁶

In August the Emperor, at the request of the Pope, ordered an army under the command of Filiberto, Prince of Orange, to attack Florence, and the government made an effort to avert by diplomacy the coming blow. On the last day of the month Niccolò Capponi, Tommaso Soderini, Matteo Strozzi, and Raffaello Girolami were despatched on a special embassy to the Emperor at Genoa, but he refused to treat with them until Florence had made her peace with the Pope.⁷ They could not at first agree as to the terms of their report, and it was not until

¹ Reumont's *Tavole, sub ann.*

² Three measures for this purpose were passed on August 6th (Varchi, p. 230).

³ Varchi, p. 231.

⁴ Alfonso, the father of Ercole d'Este, having become reconciled to the Pope, had obliged his son to relinquish this post.

⁵ Nardi, pp. 171, 173; Del Lungo, p. 91.

⁶ Nardi, p. 171. Malatesta Baglioni was not formally appointed commander-in-chief till January, 1530. Reumont's *Tavole*. It is said that Colonna was disappointed at being placed in a subordinate position to Baglioni, and that his subsequent want of energy, if not of loyalty, arose from that cause.

⁷ Varchi, p. 233; Nerli, p. 191.

they reached Piacenza that a joint letter was written to the Signory describing the true state of affairs.¹ Florence now learned too late that in the favour of the Pope (which she had degraded Niccolò Capponi for cultivating) lay her only hope.² Girolami returned home in haste, and although he had signed the despatch he urged resistance. Strozzi and Soderini thought only of their own safety; the former sought an asylum in Venice and the latter in Lucca. Capponi determined to share, if he could not avert, the coming danger, and started for Florence, but his health was broken by the violence of his grief, and when he reached Castel Nuovo he was too ill to proceed, and about a month later he died.³

Great preparations were made in Rome for the coming war,⁴ and from its very commencement fortune frowned on the Florentines. Early in September the Prince of Orange marched northwards and, on the 12th of the month, Malatesta Baglioni, who was in command of a sufficient force to impede if not to check his progress, treacherously surrendered Perugia into his hands without offering any resistance. The surrender was effected without the knowledge of the Florentine government, and, on the following day, Malatesta received a written memorandum from the Pope absolving him from all crimes which he might commit while Florence was besieged, confirming any terms of capitulation which might be agreed upon between himself and the Prince of Orange, and assuring to him his lordship of Perugia.⁵ On September the 17th Cortona was taken; on the 19th Arezzo was abandoned by Antonfrancesco degli Albizzi, and Firenzuola and Scarperia fell into the enemy's hands.⁶

Rumours were now afloat reflecting on Malatesta's fidelity, and they reached the ears of Michelangelo, who had seen enough of the commander's studied negligence in preparing for the siege to cause him to give them ready credence. He at once communicated what he had heard to the Signory, but he was rebuked for timidity by the gonfalonier.⁷ "When Michelangelo perceived

¹ Pitti, p. 137.

² Segni, p. 77.

³ He died on October 18th. It is said that his last words were, "Oimè! Oimè! Dove abbiám noi indotta la patria nostra!" (Segni, p. 89). The immediate cause of his death has been attributed to the news, brought to him by Michelangelo, that Malatesta Baglioni was a traitor (Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 421).

⁴ Varchi, p. 239.

⁵ Del Lungo, p. 92; Gino Capponi, iii. 241.

⁶ Segni, pp. 86-89; Gino Capponi, iii. 239.

⁷ Varchi, p. 293.

how little his words were worth, and in what certain peril the city stood, he caused one of the gates to be opened, by the authority which he possessed, and went forth with two of his comrades, and took the road to Venice."¹ It was on the 21st September that he fled, and he intended to take up his abode in France. On September 30th he was outlawed, and on October 7th his property was confiscated, but the government urged him to return. He did so about November 20th, and his sentence was commuted into exclusion from the Greater Council for three years.²

While these matters were taking place preparations for the siege had been continued with redoubled vigour. On Raffaello Girolami's return from Genoa in September, a solemn debate had taken place as to the course of action which Florence should pursue, and it was determined to resist the Pope. Fifteen out of the sixteen gonfaloniers of companies resolved to protect their property and their children, and not to place them at the mercy of a man who had never proved faithful to anyone.³ In the following month all the country within a mile round Florence was laid waste in order that the enemy might find no shelter. The same remark which the town clerk of Gloucester made on that city, when the Royalist army besieged it in 1643, might have been made on Florence: "She was willing to part with the skirts of her garment lest her enemies should sit on them." Vineyards and olive gardens, convents and churches, houses great and small, were all destroyed. Villas worth more than 20,000 golden florins were razed to the ground, and sometimes their owners lent a hand in their demolition.⁴ Those who thus lost their property were made creditors of the State for its value, but (needless to say) on the return of the Medici the government repudiated the debt.

¹ Condivi cited in Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 417. Some writers have maintained that Michelangelo was sent on a secret mission to Venice and never intended to desert his post (*Marietta de' Ricci*, v. 1853), but this theory has been demolished by Symonds.

² *Ibid.*, i. 431, 432.

³ Pitti, p. 120; Del Lungo, p. 81.

⁴ Varchi, p. 292; Segni, p. 76. When the convent of San Salvi was in course of destruction, Andrea del Sarto's fresco of the Last Supper became exposed to view, and the workmen were so struck with its beauty that to preserve it they spared the rest of the building. Reumont gives September 24th as the date of this incident, but Sismondi says that the edict for the destruction of the suburbs was not passed till October 19th. The destruction of some of the Medici villas at this time, by Giovambatista da Castiglioni, was probably prompted more by revenge than the public good.

Carducci's conciliatory treatment of the *Palleschi* having failed, he now resorted to a different policy. Twenty-eight citizens, who were suspected of attachment to the house of Medici, were declared rebels and their goods were confiscated. They comprised members of most of the leading Florentine families, and included such well-known names as Francesco Guicciardini, Francesco Valori, Baccio Valori, and members of the Salviati, Acciaiuoli, Pazzi, and Rucellai families.¹ And on October 13th twenty-five other suspected citizens were arrested and kept in prison till August in the following year.² On October 16th, one Carlo Cocci was beheaded for having said that the war should cease, as the Medici had a right to rule Florence;³ and on the 23rd Ficino Ficini (nephew of the great Marsilio) suffered a like fate for venturing to express an opinion that Florence fared better under the *Palle* than under the *Popolo*; and others were condemned to death for similar offences.⁴

In spite of these repressive measures, however, the Medicean party were so strong that Carducci felt compelled to negotiate, or at least to pretend to negotiate, for peace. The Pope was at this time on his way from Rome to crown the Emperor at Bologna, and he gave audience to a Florentine embassy at Cesena. The moment was a favourable one for a settlement, as the Pope was alarmed at the progress which the Turks were making in Europe,⁵ and he feared that the Emperor would soon be too fully occupied to prosecute the siege of Florence, therefore to hasten its submission he offered terms so reasonable that, on the face of them, they should have been accepted. He declared that, if Florence would re-admit his nephews as citizens, he would preserve the present popular government almost intact, and not interfere with the creation of magistrates, or disband the militia.⁶ Francesco Nasi, the sub-ambassador, was despatched to Florence with this offer, but Carducci, knowing that in the then state of public opinion it would be accepted, ordered Nasi to suppress it, and it was never even submitted to the government.⁷ In doing so it may be that Carducci exercised a sound judgment, for Clement was faithless and the terms were probably offered merely to gain admission to the city.

¹ Varchi, p. 293.

² *Ibid.*, p. 295; Nerli, p. 198. Among them was Filippo Nerli the historian.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁵ They were investing Vienna.

⁶ Segni, p. 92.

⁷ Nerli, p. 204.

Meanwhile the enemy had been approaching the walls of Florence. On October 14th, 1529, the first detachment of the imperial army encamped at the Piano di Ripoli, about a mile from the city, and other detachments continued to arrive. On October 24th, the Prince of Orange took up his quarters in a villa of the Guicciardini family, in the plain of Giulari, and on that day the siege of Florence may be said to have begun. His army at this time numbered some 30,000, which before the end of the siege was swelled to 40,000, besides a horde of camp followers all attracted by the hope of plunder. "Lady Florence, get ready your brocades, for we are coming to buy them by the spear's length," was a common saying among the besiegers.¹ The number of the Florentine garrison is given variously. It probably consisted of some 7,000 or 8,000 paid infantry, 600 cavalry, and militia which increased during the siege from 5,000 to 10,000.² There were also about 5,000 infantry quartered in Prato, Pisa, Pistoja, Empoli, and other dependent towns.

The attack was commenced by the bombardment of San Miniato, and on October 29th the church was repeatedly struck by shot from the enemy's artillery, but Michelangelo had had it so thoroughly encased with bales of wool that it suffered no damage.³

On November 1st the Pope arrived at Bologna. There he was joined by the Emperor, and the palace was thronged with ambassadors "from all the world."⁴ Clement's hopes for the recovery of Florence had risen as the Turks had retired from Vienna, and he told the Florentine ambassadors that he would now consent to no terms but the unconditional surrender of the city. Jacopo Guicciardini boldly rebuked the Pope for his cruelty, to which Clement angrily replied that he was not warring against the liberties of Florence but against its governors—the *Popolani* and *Arrabbiati*—who were impious tyrants.⁵

Florence was now friendless, for almost every State in Italy made submission to the Emperor, who had become little less than King of the Peninsula. Hopes of assistance from Venice or Genoa, or from the Dukes of Milan, Ferrara, and Urbino, which Florence had entertained, were dissipated when it was known that their representatives were at Bologna.⁶ She realised that she

¹ Varchi, p. 300. ² *Ibid.*, p. 299; Segni, p. 89; Del Lungo, p. 89.

³ Nardi, p. 182. ⁴ Segni, p. 94. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁶ Venice had encouraged Florence to resist the Pope in order that she might herself make better terms with him. Genoa had hitherto professed to be friendly, but she had an eye to the recovery of Seravezza.

had to wage a single-handed combat with the Empire and the Church, but she did not lose heart. Carlo Cappello, the Venetian ambassador who was in Florence during the whole of the siege, wrote to his government that "the spirit of the citizens is rising every hour, and they are becoming more and more desirous of measuring their strength against the enemy. Nor can it any longer be said with any truth that the farms of these citizens are hostages for them in the hands of their enemies. For so many magnificent and lovely villas have been burned not only by the enemy, but by the owners of them themselves, that it is difficult to say which is the greater, the barbarous ferocity of the enemy, or the noble determination and fortitude of these citizens. And although it is impossible not to grieve over such widespread ruin, it is nevertheless a still higher satisfaction to see the greatness of mind which is manifested in the general promptitude and willingness to suffer all these losses, and indeed any other calamity and peril, for the sake of liberty."¹

Sallies and skirmishes, in which the Florentines generally had the advantage, were of almost daily occurrence, and they were conducted with much ferocity.² "This war is a war to the death," wrote Carlo Cappello, about November 9th, "and every Spaniard or German soldier taken is put to death; for the enemy on his part does the same. The city fails not to use all diligence in every needful operation of the war; nor is there any appearance of fear or misgiving to be seen."³ On the night of November 10th the Prince of Orange tried to take the town by surprise, but he found the garrison on the alert, and he was repulsed.⁴ In December a skilfully arranged sortie by 3,000 men, all wearing white shirts over their armour, led by Stefano Colonna, was successfully carried out, and it might have ended in the rout of the besieging army had not Malatesta Baglioni treacherously sounded a retreat.⁵

Carducci's term of office was now drawing to a close, and he urged his own claims to re-election with more vigour than modesty, insisting that he was the only man who could save Florence.⁶ His fellow-citizens, however, took a different view of the matter, and they elected Raffaello Girolami to be gonfalonier

¹ As cited by Trollope, iv. 510.

² Reumont's *Tavole, sub ann.*

³ Trollope, v. 515.

⁴ Varchi, p. 309.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 313. This kind of attack was henceforth called *incamiciata*,

⁶ Nerli, p. 205.

on December 2nd, but he did not enter into office till January 1st, 1530. He held much the same political views as Carducci, and he was perhaps in some respects an abler man, but he was less energetic.¹ He was certainly more popular, for being nobly born he was not despised by the *Ottimati*, and having once been a friend of the Medici, his appointment was not obnoxious to the *Palleschi*. The *Ostinati*, who had followed Carducci, now followed him, because he was hostile to the Pope; and he was acceptable to the *Neutrali*, because he was plausible and genial to all.

His election may, however, be taken as a sign that the party who were for uncompromising resistance were losing ground. The Pope sent the Bishop of Faenza to Florence with a request that an embassy should be sent to treat with him at Bologna, and at a meeting of the Greater Council, at which 1,373 members were present, 1,000 voted that the request should be acceded to.² Accordingly, on January 14th, ten ambassadors were despatched to Bologna, but they accomplished nothing, and returned on February 7th, after having been treated with ignominy by the Pope, Emperor, and Cardinals, and with ridicule by the populace.³

An incident occurred about this time which, although it has no political significance, has somehow found for itself a place in the history of the siege of Florence.⁴ This was a duel that was fought on March 12th between Lodovico Martelli and Giovanni Bandini. Both were enamoured of Marietta de' Ricci, the beautiful wife of Niccolo Benintendi, but Giovanni was the favoured lover. This was the cause of the quarrel between them, but, to keep the lady's name in the background, it was given a political aspect. Lodovico was a supporter of the Republic, and was taking part in its defence, while his rival was a member of the Medici party, and he chanced to be in the camp of the Prince of Orange.⁵ It was reported that Giovanni had used words reflecting on the efficiency of the Florentine militia, on

¹ Del Lungo, p. 96. And less crafty.

² Varchi, p. 335. With incredible incaution the bishop was allowed to have private interviews with Malatesta Baglioni (Nardi, ii. 175).

Nerli, p. 211.

⁴ It is noticed at some length by almost every historian who treats of the siege. It also forms the *motif* of Ademollo's novel, *Marietta de' Ricci*, the 1853 edition of which has, by reason of Passerini's learned notes, become a substantial addition to Florentine history.

⁵ He alleged that he was only there on a visit to some friends.

the strength of which Lodovico sent him a challenge, and at the same time accused him of being a traitor to his country. It was arranged that a duel with swords should take place in the Imperialist camp, not only between the combatants in chief, but between their seconds. Lodovico selected as his second Dante da Castiglione, the most famous swordsman in Florence; and Giovanni brought with him a high-spirited youth, Bertino Aldobrandini. The affair was conducted with much ceremony. On March 11th the two combatants, magnificently dressed and riding on fine horses, left Florence by the Porta San Frediano, preceded by a long procession of friends, trumpeters, grooms, and pages, arrayed in scarlet and white. They also took with them a priest and a physician, a chamberlain and a cook, and a train of mules laden with necessities and luxuries. On the following day the combats took place in lists surrounded with palisades, and while they were going on hostilities between the two armies were suspended. Dante da Castiglione soon inflicted a death wound on his youthful antagonist. The combat between the principals was more prolonged, but at length Lodovico Martelli, who was blinded by blood flowing from a wound in his head, was forced to surrender to his opponent. He was carried back to Florence, and in order to console him for his defeat Marietta de' Ricci was persuaded by her relations to visit him. But his mortification was only intensified by the sight of the object of his affections, and after lingering for about three weeks he died, more from anguish of mind, it is said, than from the wounds which he had received.¹ After this combat duels between the Florentines and their enemies were of frequent occurrence.²

The Florentine garrison continued to harass the enemy, and their sorties were usually successful. It was far otherwise, however, with the garrisons in the outlying towns. Prato, Pistoja, Lastra, San Miniato al Tedesco, and Volterra were all captured by the Imperialists. Empoli alone made for a time a gallant stand. Its successful resistance was due to one man and one man alone—Francesco Ferrucci—the last of the patriot heroes produced by the Florentine Republic, whose name not unworthily closes a roll headed by that of Farinata degli Uberti. Doubtless it was now beyond the power of any one man to save Florence

¹ Varchi, pp. 349-352; Gino Capponi, iii. 271.

² Carlo Cappello, cited by Trollope, iv. 529.

—national decadence had made too much way—her day of grace was past; but, if Ferrucci had been placed in Malatesta Baglioni's position, her death-struggle would have been more desperate, and her independence might have been for a while prolonged. The *Frateschi* recognised at once that in him lay their only hope, and they called him their "Gideon."¹ He came of an old but not a wealthy family, and his training seems to have been rather commercial than military.² He had served in the militia and with the *bande nere* (probably in the commissariat department) at the siege of Naples. Nevertheless it soon became evident that he was a born general. On his return from Naples with a remnant of the *bande nere*, he was first sent as captain of the garrison of Prato, and subsequently appointed Governor of Empoli. He lost no time in putting that town in a thorough state of defence; he collected within its walls large quantities of food and ammunition, and he made it, in fact, the magazine of Florence.³ Shortly after he was made Commissioner General of the Florentine Dominion and endowed with almost dictatorial powers.⁴ By rapid marches, and assaults on garrisons where he was least expected, he kept the enemy in a constant state of alarm. He recaptured San Miniato al Tedesco and Volterra.⁵ The recovery of the latter town, however, cost him dear, for while he was there, Empoli, through the incompetence and treachery of the lieutenants whom he had left in command, fell into the enemies hands.⁶

Florence was now deprived of her main source of supplies, and her position was hopeless.⁷ Nevertheless strenuous efforts were made by the war party to prolong resistance. They endeavoured to allay party spirit, and they wrote up in large letters at the street corners *Poveri e Liberi* (Poor but Free).⁸ An appeal to the religious sentiments of the people was made by the friars of San Marco, who organised processions with a display of images and reliques in the streets.⁹ Money was raised by forced loans

¹ Marietta de' Ricci, vi. 1867.

² He was *fattorino di bottega* (*Ibid.*). Four of the Ferrucci family had been gonfaloniers, and twenty had been priors of the Republic between 1299 and 1512 (*Arch. Stor.*, iv. 460). Francesco's grandfather, Antonio, had distinguished himself in defending Pietrasanta and Sarzana in the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent (Nardi, ii. 183).

³ Varchi, p. 307.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁵ He recovered Volterra on April 26th.

⁶ Nardi, ii. 192, note 2. Empoli surrendered in June, 1530.

⁷ Nardi, pp. 189-192.

⁸ Varchi, p. 330.

⁹ Del Lungo, pp. 102, 103.

and lotteries, and by the sale of ecclesiastical property and the lands of rebels at a ruinous sacrifice. The mitre, worth 10,000 florins, which Leo X. had presented to the Cathedral, was melted down and coined into money, together with the silver lamps of the Annunziata, which had been made by Tommaso Ghirlandajo (Domenico's father). Other church plate, and many gold and silver ornaments which ladies cheerfully contributed, shared a like fate.¹

Meanwhile civil life went on much as usual. "The shops were kept open, the magistrates administered justice, business was transacted in the government offices, services were performed in the churches, the squares and market-places were frequented, and there were neither broils among the soldiers nor disputes among the citizens."² The customary game of *calcio* was played during the carnival, and (perhaps out of bravado) musicians were placed on the roof of the church of S. Croce that they might be seen and heard by the enemy.³

Food, however, was becoming scarce, and increased privations diminished the fortitude of the Florentines, for we hear from the Venetian ambassador that at the end of April "many of the citizens and city militia have left the city, flying from the inconveniences and sufferings of life within the walls."⁴ The Medici party consequently took courage, and cries of "*Palle! Palle!*" were heard in the streets. To repress this growing disaffection Lorenzo Soderini was hung for corresponding with Baccio Valori, and the bodies of many citizens of lesser note were seen dangling from the windows of the Bargello.⁵ Nevertheless, even now a measure of success might have been secured if Malatesta Baglioni could have been persuaded to force the enemy to give battle, for their army was suffering from disease and scarcity of food, and was mutinous for want of pay. He consented to an attempt to recover Prato and Pistoja by Stefano Colonna, but ensured the failure of the expedition by prematurely recalling the attacking force. Hitherto he had continued to retain the confidence of the citizens by being all things to all men. He talked to the *Ostinati* of the joys of Liberty, and to the *Neutrali* of the joys of Peace; he extolled the virtues of the Pope to the *Palleschi*, and the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 102; Nerli, p. 202; Vasari, ii. 201. Florentine merchants in London, Lyons, and Flanders, contributed large sums towards the expenses of the war.

² Varchi, p. 330.

³ Del Lungo, p. 103.

⁴ Trollope, iv. 526.

⁵ Varchi, p. 398; Napier, iv. 454.

advantages of an oligarchy to the *Ottimati*.¹ But now his treachery became common talk, and he did not venture to enter the council chamber without a bodyguard, fearing, as he said, that he might be forced "to take the leap of Baldaccio."

During the month of July the privations of the Florentines were becoming intolerable. On July 6th, the *Contadini* who had taken refuge in the city, and their wives and children, numbering about 6,000, were ordered to leave, but, when assembled together for expulsion, they presented such a piteous spectacle that the Signory had not the heart to enforce the edict. By July 14th all the fresh meat, wine, and oil had been consumed, and roofs were stripped from the houses for fuel. The cats had all been eaten, rats fetched high prices, and the carcase of a mouse sold for thirteen soldi.² It was estimated that all the food in the city would be exhausted by the end of the first week in August. The government were convinced that if the city was to be saved some desperate step must be taken, and seeing that Malatesta could not be moved to action, they directed that a simultaneous attack should be made on the besieging army by almost the whole of the Florentine garrison under the gonfalonier, and by all the forces which Ferrucci was able to collect. It was at the same time determined that if this attack failed, the remnant of the garrison who were defending the gates should kill all the women and children and set fire to the houses; "to the end that the city being destroyed, there should only remain the memory of the citizens' greatness of mind, that it might be an immortal example to those who should thereafter be born free and wished to preserve their liberty," and that in time to come passers-by should say, "*Here was Florence*."³ Malatesta openly discouraged the scheme, and secretly negotiated with the Prince of Orange for the purpose of frustrating it. But, in spite of his opposition, an army of 16,000 fighting men was marshalled for a general sortie; on July 31st a solemn religious service was held in the Cathedral, and August 1st (an annual holiday) was spent in preparation for battle. As the situation became more desperate, the enthusiasm of the *Piagnoni* increased, for they remembered that Savonarola had prophesied

¹ Ricotti's *Compagnie di Ventura*, iv. 61.

² Letter from Carlo Cappello (Trollope, iv. 541). Thirteen soldi at that date would be equivalent in value to about five shillings at the present time.

³ Letter from Carlo Cappello (cited by Napier, iv. 482).

that when all earthly help failed Heaven would interfere to save Florence, and numbers of them believed that

“ Millions of flaming swords drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim ”

would destroy the imperial army.

Ferrucci worked energetically and loyally to perform the part which he had been instructed to play, although it is said that he disapproved of the scheme. He had devised a much more heroic measure for the relief of his native city. Had he been allowed, he would have marched with all possible speed on Rome. Had he done so the Prince of Orange would have raised the siege and followed him, for Rome was undefended; and his forces would have been recruited by desertions from the imperial army (which numbered many bent only on plunder), as soon as it became known that his object was the sack of Rome.¹ The Signory were, however, too timid to sanction the plan.

On July 15th Ferrucci left Volterra for Pisa, where he collected reinforcements. On July 31st he ascended the mountains above Pistoja with 3,000 infantry and 400 cavalry, intending to descend on Florence, but he was deceived by his guides, who led him to San Marcello, a village about eight miles distant from Pracchia.² The Prince of Orange, who was kept informed, either by spies or by Malatesta's treachery, of Ferrucci's movements, marched northwards on August 2nd at the head of 8,000 picked men to intercept his progress.³ On August 3rd, as a detachment of the Imperialists under Maramaldo entered Gavinana, a picturesque village situate on the slopes of the Apennines just above San Marcello, Ferrucci led his forces into it by the opposite gate, and a desperate conflict ensued in its streets. The Florentines fought gallantly and at first had the advantage, but they were ultimately overpowered by numbers and utterly defeated. Although the action lasted only three hours, more than 2,000 of the combatants were killed, and both the generals lost their lives under tragic circumstances. The Prince of Orange fell while hastening to support his advanced guard, shot in the breast and the back—the latter wound inflicted, it is said, by order of the Pope, who mistrusted the Prince's intentions with regard to Florence.⁴

¹ Nardi, ii. 204; *Arch. Stor.*, iv. 442.

² Varchi, p. 414.

³ Gino Capponi, iii. 295.

⁴ Varchi, p. 417; *Marietta de' Ricci*, vi. 1973; Napier, iv. 476.

Ferrucci, who had been severely wounded during the fray, was taken prisoner and barbarously stabbed by Maramaldo in cold blood in the market-place of Gavinana. "Fabrizio, you are killing a dead man," he exclaimed, and falling to the ground he was despatched by the soldiers who surrounded him.¹ Meanwhile Malatesta Baglioni had contrived to prevent the contemplated attack on the besieging army and the sending of a contingent to aid Ferrucci.

On August 2nd he forwarded to the Signory a written protest, signed by himself and Stefano Colonna, against the expediency of the general sortie which had been planned, urging that it could only end in disaster, and another protest to the same effect was presented on the following day. It has been said that, on the night preceding the Prince of Orange's march to Gavinana, he had had a secret interview with Malatesta, who had given him a written promise that his army should not be attacked by the Florentines during his absence,² but the story is discredited by some writers.³ There is nothing in Malatesta's character or conduct to lead to the belief that he was incapable of such an act of treachery, but it is just to him to say that the Venetian ambassador believed that in opposing the sortie he was acting in accordance with the wishes of the greater number of the citizens and of a part of the army,⁴ and Nerli thought that three-quarters of the people were in favour of surrender.⁵ When the Signory realised that Malatesta could not be induced to carry out their orders, they formally deprived him of his command, but he stabbed the messenger who served him with his dismissal, saying, "Go back to your masters and tell them that they shall, in spite of themselves, make submission to the Pope,"⁶ and thenceforth behaved as if he were governor of the town. He openly treated with Ferrante Gonzaga (who had succeeded the Prince of Orange in command of the Imperialist forces), and when the militia advanced to enforce his dismissal, he turned his artillery on the city and threatened to open its gates. Despair and confusion

¹ Gino Capponi, iii. 294. He was buried in the church at Gavinana. "It is fitting that the greatest man who was fighting for the Republic should find his grave among the Apennines" (Del Lungo, p. 108).

² It is said that a promise to this effect, in Malatesta's handwriting, was found on the Prince after his death (Varchi, p. 420; Ricotti's *Compagni di Ventura*, iv. 67).

Segni, p. 121; Gino Capponi, iii. 292.

⁴ Trollope, iv. 545.

⁵ Nerli, p. 237. "There were very few who preferred Liberty to Life or Honesty to Profit" (Varchi, p. 427).

⁶ Nardi, ii. 212.

reigned. The *Ostinati* were still for resistance, but the peace party were hourly increasing in numbers, and the militia were becoming disaffected. At length the government were compelled to accept the inevitable, and on August 9th ambassadors were sent into the enemy's camp to arrange terms of surrender. So deeply ingrained was the spirit of faction in the Florentine character that suffering and a common danger could not extinguish it, and, while the ambassadors were absent, civil strife almost broke out. An armed band of the *Palleschi* under Alamanno de' Pazzi dispersed Dante da Castiglione's *Ostinati* guard, and compelled the Signory to release all those who had been imprisoned for their adherence to the Medici.¹

Articles of capitulation were signed on August 12th.² By them it was agreed that the form of government was "to be regulated and established within four months by his Imperial Majesty, it being always understood that liberty is to be preserved." Florence was to pay an indemnity of 80,000 florins within six months; all of the exiled Medici were to be recalled; and the Pope undertook to forgive all past injuries and to treat his countrymen with affection and clemency "as he always had done."³ On the completion of the treaty the famished population rushed into the imperial camp and almost cleared it of provisions.⁴ Baccio Valori assumed the control of affairs. He occupied the Palazzo with a strong guard of foreign mercenaries, and on August 20th he summoned a Parliament which was as great a sham as Florentine Parliaments had ever been. In an assembly of not more than 300 citizens, in which all dissent was suppressed by force, a *Balìa* was created amid cries of "*Palle! Palle!*" and the Republic of Florence, as an independent government, was no more.⁵

Although the submission of Florence had been nominally to the Emperor, it was practically to the Pope. It was the Pope and not the Emperor who reconstructed the Florentine government. Hardly any of the more important articles of the capitulation were observed. The Pope's forgiveness and clemency were shown by the execution of Carducci, by the imprisonment of

¹ Varchi, p. 428.

² Ferrante Gonzaga acted for the Emperor and Baccio Valori for the Pope.

³ Varchi, p. 429.

⁴ During the siege the Florentines lost 8,000 and the Imperialists 14,000 soldiers, and large numbers of non-combatants on both sides perished (Varchi, p. 430).

⁵ Varchi, p. 432.

Girolami, and by starving to death one of the friars of San Marco (who had preached resistance to papal authority) in the castle of S. Angelo.¹ Alessandro de' Medici, the natural son of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, and the great-grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent, entered Florence on July 5th, 1531, and on the following day he was declared Head of the Republic. In 1532 the Signory was abolished, and Alessandro was created gonfalonier for life. Henceforward Florence was subjected to what she had been struggling against for centuries—*il governo d'un solo*. This was Clement's method of preserving her liberty.

¹ Del Lungo, p. 110; Varchi, p. 441.

CHAPTER XXVI

1492-1530

ART AND LITERATURE FROM THE DEATH OF LORENZO DE' MEDICI TO THE SIEGE OF FLORENCE

ARCHITECTS	SCULPTORS	PAINTERS	AUTHORS
Giuliano da San Gallo	Andrea della Robbia	Botticelli	Machiavelli
Il Cronaca	Giovanni della Robbia	Filippino Lippi	Guicciardini
Baccio d'Agnolo	Giuliano da San Gallo	Leonardo da Vinci	Michelangelo
Jacopo Sansovino	Francesco da San Gallo	Perugino	
Raphael	Baccio d'Agnolo	Lorenzo di Credi	
Michelangelo	Benedetto da Majano	Piero di Cosimo	
	Andrea Sansovino	Fra Bartolommeo	
	Jacopo Sansovino	Albertinelli	
	Benedetto da Rovezzano	Andrea del Sarto	
	Piero Torrigiano	Michelangelo	
	Andrea Ferrucci	Granacci	
	Baccio da Montelupo	Franciabigio	
	Baccio Bandinelli	Raffaellino del Garbo	
	Michelangelo	Buggiardini	
		R. Ghirlandajo	
		Pontormo	
		Raphael	

ARCHITECTURE

IN Florence Renaissance Architecture was born and in Florence the disease which put an end to its existence was contracted. Brunelleschi was its parent, and Michelangelo (more than any single man) was its destroyer.¹ Its decline, which did not become general till the middle of the sixteenth century, was visible in Florence during the interval between the death of Lorenzo and the siege. The signs of its advent were, however, at first rather negative than positive. The period was not prolific in stately

¹ Localisations of national movements are seldom more than approximate truths, but this statement is substantially correct.

structures,¹ nor can one of its buildings be considered a first-rate specimen of Renaissance Architecture, or of equal merit to many of those with which Peruzzi, San Michele, and Sansovino, were at this very time beautifying Venice, Verona, Bologna, Siena, and Rome. It is true that during the first two decades of the sixteenth century, while Giuliano da San Gallo and Cronaca were at work, hardly any deterioration in taste is discernible in Florentine architecture; but in 1520 Baccio d'Agnolo designed "the last of the good and the first of the bad" palaces in Florence² and, a few years later, Michelangelo sowed in the San Lorenzo Sacristy and the Laurentian Library seeds which blossomed into the barocco. The decadence of Renaissance Architecture, though it commenced earlier, proceeded more gradually in Florence than in other parts of Italy, and its final collapse was not so complete there as elsewhere.

Soon after the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, GIULIANO DA SAN GALLO built the large, but not otherwise remarkable, church of S. Maria delle Carceri at Prato. In 1495 he went to Loreto, and thence to Rome, but being disappointed that Bramante was appointed architect of S. Peter's instead of himself, he returned to Florence. There he built, in 1501, the Palazzo Gondi, a good specimen of Florentine domestic architecture.³ He also designed the *cortile* of the church of S. M. Maddalena de' Pazzi, but whether before or after his visit to Rome is uncertain.⁴ He did much work as a military engineer during the war with Pisa (1504-1509). About 1514 he went once more to Rome, and for a few months he was joint architect of S. Peter's with Raphael, but resigned the appointment through failing health. He returned to Florence, and died there in 1517.

ANTONIO DA SAN GALLO (1448-1534) was a younger brother of Giuliano, with whom he often worked in partnership. The central arch of the portico of the Annunziata, and the building on the right of the church with its graceful *loggia*, are said to be his work. They were built between 1513 and 1520. Like his brother, he was a skilful military engineer.⁵

¹ Owing perhaps to the unsettled state of political affairs.

² The Palazzo Antinori. Fergusson's *History of Modern Architecture* (1862), p. 88.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 86; Horner, i. 275. It may have been commenced before 1492.

⁴ Richa, i. 321.

⁵ He aided his brother in the erection of the Panciatichi palace, which was built probably before 1492. His finest work out of Florence is the church of

Simone, the brother of Antonio and Piero Pollaiuolo, called IL CRONACA (1455-1509), was esteemed one of the best architects of his day.¹ After Benedetto da Majano left Florence, in 1490, the completion of the great Strozzi palace was entrusted to him, and Vasari seems to think that he improved on Majano's design.² The cornice, which is strikingly bold, and the fine courtyard were certainly his work. When, in 1495, a council chamber of unusual size was required for the accommodation of the newly constituted *Consiglio Maggiore*, the Signory, after consulting Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Giuliano da San Gallo, commissioned Cronaca to erect one, and the Sala dei Cinquecento was built from his design. He also built in 1504 the church of S. Salvatore al Monte (formerly called S. Francesco dell'Osservanza) on the hill of San Miniato, which, unlike most Renaissance buildings, charms by its simplicity. It was greatly admired by Michelangelo, who called it "a fair country maiden."³ Cronaca was employed with others to complete S. Spirito, but whether he designed the sacristy, or in conjunction with San Gallo only its vestibule, is not very clear.⁴ The cloister of the Annunziata was his work, and possibly also the Palazzo Guadagni and Villa Nuti.⁵ Cronaca, who was always an admirer of Savonarola, became at the end of his life a fanatical *Piagnone*.⁶

BACCIO D'AGNOLO (1462-1543) began life as an *intarsiatore*, but subsequently he obtained no little eminence as an architect and sculptor. He assisted Cronaca in building the Sala dei Cinquecento in 1495. In 1518 he designed the campanile of the church of San Miniato, which was saved by Michelangelo from destruction during the siege of Florence. The beautiful gallery round the side of the cupola of the Duomo facing the Via del Proconsolo (the only part completed) was designed by him. The work was stopped in 1519 owing to a remark by Michelangelo that it was like a cricket's cage.⁷ The pavement in the nave

S. Biagio at Montepulciano. At the end of his life he was appointed architect of S. Peter's, and would have altered the plans had not death interrupted his intentions.

¹ Simone went to Rome in his youth, and on his return to Florence he gave such graphic accounts of what he had seen that he was called *Il Cronaca* (the Chronicler). Vasari, iii. 80.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 82.

³ *La bella Villanella*.

⁴ Richa, ix. 32; Vasari, iii. 86; Anderson's *Architecture of the Renaissance in Italy* (1896), p. 30; Horner, i. 529.

⁵ Richa, viii. 61; Horner, i. 526, and ii. 422.

⁶ Vasari, iii. 92.

⁷ Vasari, iii. 461; Grimm's *Life of Michelangelo*, i. 424.

of the Duomo has been attributed to him in conjunction with his son Giuliano and Francesco da San Gallo.¹ The Borgherini, Torregiani, Serristori, Bartolini, and Pecori-Geraldi palaces, and the Villa Castellani on Bellosquardo were all his work, and the Antinori palace (if not by Giuliano da San Gallo) was also his. For the design of the Palazzo Bartolini (now the Hotel du Nord) he incurred much ridicule, as it was the first domestic building with a portal, the columns of which supported an architrave, frieze, and cornice.² It was begun in 1520, and its style is transitional between that of the Riccardi and Strozzi palaces and that known as Palladian. One of Baccio's best works was the campanile of the church of S. Spirito which was completed in 1541.³

JACOPO SANSOVINO (1477-1570),⁴ one of the most gifted of the sixteenth-century architects, was a Florentine by birth and education. He left no buildings in his native city, but he designed for his fellow-countrymen the fine church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini in Rome. His architectural reputation was, however, achieved in Venice, where the impress of his individuality is still to be seen.⁵ Many of his works are good specimens of the mid-Renaissance style, but they are overloaded with ornament and furthered the architectural decline. He was, if we except Michelangelo, the last of the Florentine sculptor-architects.

RAPHAEL, at Bramante's request, was appointed chief architect of S. Peter's in 1514, but a sober criticism of his architectural works "must force one to refuse him a high position in this branch of art."⁶ The Palazzo Pandolfini is the only building in Florence which was certainly built from his design. It is one of the most typical palaces of the period.⁷ The design of the Palazzo Uguccione, which stands on the north side of the Piazza della Signoria, has been variously assigned to Raphael, Michelangelo, and Palladio.⁸

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI (1475-1564) was born at Caprese, a village (or rather a collection of hamlets) in that part of the

¹ Vasari, iii. 462; Horner, i. 69. Richa (vol. vi. p. 124) thinks that Baccio had no hand in it. ² Vasari, iii. 459. ³ Richa, ix. 58.

⁴ The date of his birth has recently been given as 1486. Anderson's *Italian Renaissance Architecture* (1896), p. 117.

⁵ Perkins, i. 253. He built numerous palaces and churches in Venice. The Libreria Vecchia is perhaps his *chef d'œuvre*.

⁶ Prof. Middleton, *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 281.

⁷ Anderson's *Architecture of the Renaissance* (1896), p. 81.

⁸ Horner, i. 200.

Florentine territory which is known as the Casentino. He was regarded by his contemporaries as the greatest painter and sculptor of his day, and their verdict has unquestionably been endorsed by posterity. It is, however, with his powers as an architect that we are now concerned, and it is as an architect that his name, at least among the general public, is probably most widely known. And, strangely enough, his connection with a single edifice has given him this perhaps undeserved reputation. Nor is this unnatural, for no building lives more vividly in the memory than the dome of S. Peter's, as will be readily admitted by all who have seen its wondrously beautiful outline standing out at sundown, clear cut like a cameo, against a vapourless Italian sky.

It was not till he was forty years old that he turned his attention to architecture, and not till he was close upon fifty that any of his designs were put into execution. As was to be expected, his previous career was productive of good and evil in his newly undertaken work. The judgment of M. Charles Garnier, himself a practical architect, though severe, is substantially correct. "Michelangelo was not properly speaking an architect," he says. "He had not learned the language of the art. He has all the qualities of imagination, invention, will, which form a great composer; but he does not know the grammar and can hardly write."¹ He often sacrificed truthfulness of construction to general effect. Doors, windows, consoles, and other architectural features, were introduced merely to break the monotony of a wall surface.² Hence he was in no small measure responsible for hurrying Renaissance architecture along its downward course into the vagaries of the barocco.

In 1515 Leo X., when visiting Florence, determined to complete the family church of the Medici, S. Lorenzo, the façade of which was still wanting. He invited Raphael, Giuliano da San Gallo, Baccio d'Agnolo, and Andrea and Jacopo Sansovino to furnish designs for this façade, and he summoned Michelangelo to Florence, intending to entrust to him the sculpture and the general direction of the work. Michelangelo left the tomb of Julius II., on which he was engaged at Rome, most unwillingly; nevertheless he determined, though uninvited, to compete with

¹ *Œuvres et la vie de Michel-Ange*, cited in Symonds' *Life of Michelangelo*, ii. 11.

² Anderson's *Architecture of the Renaissance in Italy* (1896), p. 129.

Raphael and the other artists, and he forwarded to the Pope a drawing of a façade. Whether he was prompted to do so by a sudden ambition to gain fame as an architect, or by a dislike of the proposed arrangement, is not known. The latter is probably the case, as he could brook no sort of control, and his irritability of temper made it impossible for him to work with collaborators. Unluckily for him, his design was selected, and he was despatched to Carrara to procure the necessary marble.¹ While thus engaged he wrote to a friend that he felt he had it in him to construct a façade which should be "a mirror of architecture and sculpture to all Italy."² In December, 1517, he went to Rome and submitted to the Pope and Cardinal Giulio de' Medici a model of the façade. He estimated that it would cost 35,000 ducats and be completed in six years. But the money, which the Pope contemplated expending on the work, was exhausted in foreign wars, and he was forced to abandon the scheme. Michelangelo believed that Leo X. never seriously intended that it should be carried out, and that he had only set about it in order to prevent the completion of Julius II.'s tomb. Many huge blocks of marble had been transported to Florence, but not a statue had been carved or a stone set up, and nearly three precious years of Michelangelo's life had been spent in quarrying and road-making. The front of San Lorenzo remains to this day unfinished—a perpetual memorial of a cruel waste of genius.

After the abandonment of the façade, Michelangelo was commissioned to convert the sacristy of San Lorenzo into a mausoleum for the Medici family, and to design tombs for certain of its members.³ The new building, which followed the ground plan of the old one, was roofed in by 1524. Internally this chapel is severely simple, but it is said that it has proved a stumbling-block to subsequent architects from its violation of the laws of structure. This may be true, but here, if anywhere, such faults should be leniently criticised, and Michelangelo may be pardoned if he regarded it merely as a setting for the monuments which it was to enshrine. Nor are we in a position to judge of Michelangelo's taste by its present aspect, for the

¹ Michelangelo was much harassed by being required by the Pope to leave Carrara and obtain marble from Seravezza. A new road had to be made, and the transit of the marble was much delayed (Vasari, v. 269).

² Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 326.

³ These tombs will be alluded to under "Sculpture."

arrangement of the statues and the internal decorations were incomplete at his death.¹

While this work was in progress he was requested by Clement VII. to prepare plans for the Laurentian Library, which he unwillingly consented to do, protesting that architecture was not his profession.² The faults of his style are far more evident in this building than in the sacristy, and without the same excuse. Doors which lead nowhere and windows which give no light are crowded together, nevertheless the appearance of the whole, in spite of its constructional insincerity, is effective. This was the last building which Michelangelo erected in Florence. His architectural achievements in Rome, which occupied the later years in his life, must be left unnoticed. Suffice it to say that in one of these at least the hand of the amateur had disappeared, for the dome of S. Peter's is as constructionally scientific as it is artistically beautiful.³

Before the death of Michelangelo, Italian Architecture had become thoroughly debased, and was hurrying towards extinction, but by different roads. It had split up into two schools, the one of which ultimately expired from plethora, and the other from atrophy. The first (fostered by Michelangelo) made an excessive and often an illegitimate use of ornamentation; the second (founded by Palladio) aimed only at a close and unimaginative imitation of classical forms. The most flagrant examples of this decadence in either phase are not, however, to be found in Florence, whose citizens would never tolerate the deceptive eccentricities of the Michelangelesque or the death-like stiffness of the Palladian succession.

SCULPTURE

The sun of Renaissance Sculpture was now fast setting. Only a few of the artists who carried on the traditions of the *quattrocentisti* sculptors were living. Benedetto da Majano died in 1497, and Andrea della Robbia in 1525. Benedetto da Rovezzano alone lived through the second quarter of the sixteenth century, and at his death the last trace of daylight in the sky disappeared.⁴ Anyone, who wishes to realise the gulf

¹ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, ii. 21, 24.

² *Ibid.*, i. 372.

³ It was constructed by later architects from a model made by Michelangelo, but, though modified, his design was in the main followed.

⁴ Perkins, i. 266.

which separates Florentine sculpture of the fifteenth from that of the sixteenth century, has only to walk from Or San Michele to the Piazza della Signoria, and compare Donatello's S. George with Baccio Bandinelli's Hercules and Cacus. "The evil which men do lives after them"; the faults which Donatello committed in his early works survived when the perfection of style which he attained in the S. George had vanished. Sculptors had now forgotten "that something more was wanted in a crucifix than the careful study of a robust peasant boy."¹ Not that a crucifix was often in these days attempted for, in choice of subject, Paganism now held the field. And what from an artistic point of view was far worse, in rendering the subject, Paganism had succumbed to Naturalism. The sculptors of the decadence never realised the full significance of the pagan myths which they so frequently represented, and aimed at little more than copying models accurately. They did not understand that the chief excellence of Greek sculpture lay, not in its correct anatomy, but in the fulness with which it typified an idea. Of the Greek sense of beauty they were for the most part devoid, nor did they ever attempt to imitate its dignity, its joyousness, or its serenity. The story of Hercules and Cacus became in Bandinelli's hands nothing but "a wrestling bout of a porter and a coal-heaver," and the sculptured work of the end of the century was even worse, as it became feeble as well as vulgar and pretentious.²

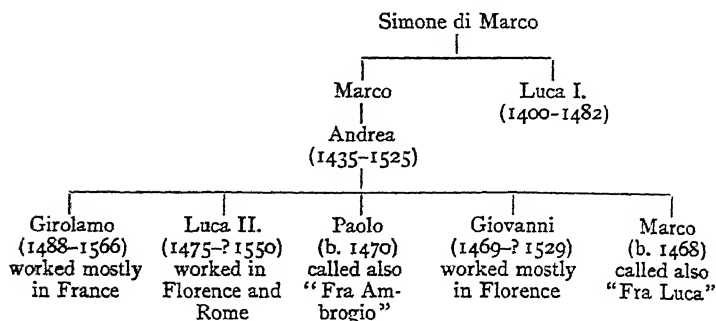
The reputation of the first half of that century was, however, immeasurably raised, as far as sculpture is concerned, by the presence of a single individual. During the whole of the period Michelangelo was at work, and though his style was deeply imbued with decadent tendencies, the sublimity of his genius gave a lustre to the era which it would not otherwise have possessed. He was the last of the race of intellectual giants produced by the Italian Renaissance. It would, however, have been well for the world of Art could he have passed like a meteor across the darkening sky without affecting the lesser lights.³

ANDREA DELLA ROBBIA died in 1525, after which the manufacture of Robbia-ware was continued by five of his sons.

¹ Symonds, iii. 233.

² *Ibid.*, iii. 173.

³ Perkins, ii. 69.



The finest of the works turned out of his factory are little, if at all, inferior to those of Luca I., for both he and his son Giovanni were real artists, but the productions of some of his other assistants have not much merit. Andrea's last known work is a relief of a Nativity which was made for S. Maria in Pian di Mugnone in 1515.

Some of GIOVANNI DELLA ROBBIA's early work was equal to his father's, but his later works show unmistakable signs of the deterioration that was taking place in the Art of the period. One of his finest works is the beautiful *lavabo* in the sacristy of S. Maria Novella, which was made in 1497 and is of such merit that it is often attributed to his great-uncle Luca. In 1521 he made a large polychromatic Nativity for the church of S. Girolamo—not a pleasing work—which is now in the Bargello.¹ Giovanni, unlike other members of his family, usually signed and dated his works. Nothing in Robbia-ware in Florence can with certainty be ascribed to any other of Andrea's sons. Girolamo spent most of his life in France, where he built the Chateau de Madrid for Francis I. Paolo and Marco, under the influence of Savonarola, became Dominican monks.

GIULIANO DA SAN GALLO was not as eminent a sculptor as an architect and engineer, but he has left some sculptured works of merit, notably the tomb of Francesco Sassetti and his wife, in the church of S. Trinità at Florence.² The marble framework round the tomb of Agnolo Acciaiuoli and two emblematical statuettes in the Certosa, near Florence, are his, as are also the decorations in the Chapel of the Crucifix in S. Maria Novella, and a wooden crucifix in one of the chapels of the Annunziata.

¹ His most important work out of Florence is the frieze round the Ceppo Hospital at Pistoja.

² Perkins, i. 255.

The chimney-piece in the hall of the Palazzo Gondi, which is supposed to be by him, was probably executed after 1492.

FRANCESCO DA SAN GALLO (1493-1570), a son of the famous architect Giuliano, was a pupil of Andrea Sansovino. He was "a man of talent, bred in a good school, who appears mediocre if compared with the great artists of the fifteenth century, but is decidedly superior to many of the sixteenth."¹ In 1526 he executed the group of a Madonna and Child with S. Anna in Or San Michele. Most of his works (including the monument of Leonardo Buonafede, in the chapter-house at the Certosa, which is his masterpiece) were executed after 1530.

BACCIO D'AGNOLO has not left much sculptured work. Vasari praises his carved door-frames and chimney-pieces in the Palazzo Borgherini, and attributes to him some of the marble decorations in the Sala dei Dugento in the Palazzo Vecchio.² A marble organ gallery which he executed for S. Maria Novella is now in the South Kensington Museum. Some of his *intarsia* work is to be seen in the choir of the Annunziata, where is also a fine wooden ciborium which he carved.

BENEDETTO DA MAJANO returned from Naples to Florence in 1493, and in the following year he commenced the beautiful marble pulpit in S. Croce, on the panels of which are sculptured five reliefs, one of which, representing the body of S. Francis in the church of Assisi, is of exceptional merit.³ Between this date and his death, which occurred in 1497, he executed at S. Gimignano some of his finest works.⁴ His undated works include a crucifix in Florence Cathedral, a statue of S. Sebastian in the Bigallo, and a ciborium in the abbey of Settimo.

Benedetto had begun life as an *intarsiatore*, but realising the perishable nature of the work which he was producing, he abandoned the craft.⁵ The consummate skill with which he had practised it is manifested by *intarsiatura* on the walls of the Segrestia della Messa in the Cathedral, and on an altar-frontal in the Opera del Duomo.

ANDREA SANSOVINO, after his return from Portugal in 1500, commenced the group of John baptising Christ, which is over

¹ Perkins, i. 253.

² Vasari, iii. 459, 460.

³ Perkins, i. 232. Benedetto's studies in terra-cotta for three of these panels are in the South Kensington Museum.

⁴ The shrine of S. Bartolo in the church of S. Agostino and the altar-piece in the chapel of S. Fina in the Duomo.

⁵ Vasari, ii. 241.

the eastern door of the Baptistery at Florence. It is less pure in style than his earlier works, but this may be partly due to the hand of Vincenzo Danti, by whom it was finished in 1560. His subsequent works, executed in Rome and Loreto, display a more marked decline in taste. His monuments of two cardinals in S. Maria del Popolo have much beauty of detail, but the recumbent effigies are in attitudes "which could not exist in life or be maintained in death."¹ These tombs were greatly admired by his contemporaries, and copied by his successors with increasing exaggeration of their defects. Nevertheless Andrea never quite lost the stylistic purity of the Donatello school.

JACOPO SANSOVINO (1477-1570) was the pupil of Andrea Sansovino, from whom he took his name.² He acquired the mannered style of his master's later works unredeemed by any reminiscence of the simplicity of the *quattrocentisti*. He may be said to mark the final intrusion of Paganism into Italian sculpture.³ His Bacchus in the Bargello, executed about 1511, is one of the best statues ever conceived in the antique spirit, and in some respects compares favourably with that of Michelangelo, near which it stands.⁴ About the same time he sculptured the S. James which is now in Florence Cathedral. The bronze copy of the Laocoon, in the Uffizi, was cast from a model made by him. The architectural statues in Venice belong to his later life, and are very inferior to those in Florence. His influence was great all over Italy, as he founded schools in Florence, Rome, and Venice, and the vicious tendencies of his style were developed and spread broadcast by a host of pupils. A portrait of him by Titian hangs in the Uffizi.

BENEDETTO DA ROVEZZANO (c. 1474-c. 1552)⁵ was distinguished as a sculptor of ornament which he designed with a peculiar sense of fitness, and for his skill in carving small figures in relief.⁶ He does not seem to have been so successful in statues, if we may judge by his S. John in the Duomo at Florence. One of his best, and also one of the earliest, specimens of his decorative work is the fine chimney-piece which he made for Pier Francesco

¹ Perkins, i. 243.

² His family name was Tatti.

³ Symonds, iii. 168.

⁴ Perkins, i. 248; Symonds, iii. 169.

⁵ His real name was Benedetto di Bartolommeo di Ricco de' Grazini, and he was called Rovazzano from the little town of that name, near Florence, where he owned an estate. The date of Benedetto's birth is given by Perkins in his *Tuscan Sculptors* (1864) as 1490, and corrected in his *Historical Handbook* (1883) to c. 1475.

⁶ Perkins, i. 257.

Borgherini, and which is now in the Bargello.¹ In 1512 he commenced the monument of gonfalonier Piero Soderini in the church of the Carmine, and some of the ornaments on it he afterwards repeated on the tomb of Oddo Altoviti in the church of SS. Apostoli.² His peculiar excellencies are conspicuous in both these monuments. His most important work has unfortunately perished. This was the tomb of S. Giovanni Gualberto, the founder of the Vallombrosan Order, which was to be placed in the church of S. Trinità at Florence. It was to consist of a sarcophagus enclosed within a sepulchral chapel, enriched "with a large number of statues in niches, and with columns, pilasters, friezes, and an infinite variety of fanciful ornaments, the whole of which were to be delicately carved."³ On this monument he laboured for nearly ten years, when, through dissensions among the Vallombrosan monks, who had given him the commission, the work was stopped though almost completed. It remained in his studio outside the walls of Florence for the next five years, when it was broken up by soldiers of the attacking army during the siege. Five sadly mutilated reliefs, now in the Bargello, are all that remain of it. If the whole tomb was as excellent in design and execution as these fragments it must have been a thing of rare beauty.

An almost similar ill fortune attended Rovezzano's next great work. In 1524 he came to England and commenced a tomb for Cardinal Wolsey, on which he was still engaged in 1530, when the Cardinal fell into disgrace. Henry VIII. ordered the monument to be finished for himself, but for some unexplained cause he was not buried in it. About a century later Charles I. intended to appropriate it for his own use, and would doubtless have done so but for his untimely end. During the Commonwealth it was barbarously stripped of the copper figures and other ornaments with which it was adorned by order of Parliament. The marble sarcophagus, which formed its nucleus, was spared, and now holds the body of Nelson. After the death of Henry VIII. Rovezzano returned to Italy, but was prevented doing much more work through blindness. He died in 1552.⁴

¹ Until 1884 it was in the Casa Roselli.

² Vasari, iii. 131; Perkins, i. 257.

³ Vasari, iii. 133.

⁴ Perkins' *Historical Handbook* (1883), p. 247. What other works were executed in England by Rovezzano does not seem to be known. He earned enough money while there to end his days in comfort (Vasari, iii. 135).

PIERO TORRIGIANO (1472-1522) does not rank amongst first-class Florentine sculptors. None of his works are to be seen in his native city, and but for his connection with England, he would hardly deserve notice. He studied sculpture in the gardens of S. Marco with other young artists, more talented than himself, who have been mentioned. In his youth he earned an unenviable notoriety by disfiguring Michelangelo for life. The two young men were studying Masaccio's frescoes in the Carmine, when Torrigiano, at some real or supposed provocation, struck Michelangelo a blow in the face which broke the bridge of his nose. For this outrage he incurred the displeasure of Lorenzo de' Medici and fled from Florence. In 1513 he went to England, where he made the monument of Henry VII. in Westminster Abbey.¹ An altar and baldacchino of marble, gilded bronze, and terra-cotta, which he also made for Henry VII.'s Chapel, was destroyed by the Puritans in the seventeenth century. The tomb of Margaret, Countess of Richmond, in Westminster Abbey, and the terra-cotta effigy of Dr. Young, in Lincoln's Inn Chapel, are from the similarity of their style to that of his other works, attributed to Torrigiano. The tomb of Henry VII. is perhaps the best example of Italian Renaissance architectural sculpture in England. He died in the prisons of the Inquisition in Spain in 1522.²

ANDREA FERRUCCI (1465-1526) was far from being one of the first artists of his day, but he was trained in a good school.³ One of his best works is the half-length figure of Marsilio Ficino in the Duomo at Florence, which was executed after 1499. The ancona of the high altar in the Duomo at Fiesole, also by him, is a pleasing work with some delicately sculptured reliefs on the gradino. A more elaborate and highly finished altar-piece, which Ferrucci made for the church of S. Girolamo at Fiesole, is now in the South Kensington Museum.

BACCIO DA MONTELUPO (1469-? 1533) is another sculptor of this period who holds but second rank. His best work is the monument of Cardinal Luigi de' Rossi in the church of S. Felicità, at Florence, which was executed after 1519. The statue of S. John the Evangelist, outside Or San Michele, is by him, and the crucifix

¹ In England he went by the name of "Peter Torrysany."

² Perkins, i. 260-266; *Ency. Brit.*, xxiii. 453.

³ Perkins, i. 234.

over the high altar in the same church (sometimes attributed to Donatello) is also probably his.

The name of BACCIO BANDINELLI (1487-1559) is familiar rather from the position of undeserved prominence which has been assigned to one of his works than to any merits that they possess. The colossal "Hercules and Cacus" which now disfigures the Piazza della Signoria, and which was for many years the pendant to Michelangelo's David, was begun by Bandinelli in 1530 and finished in 1534. The splendid block of marble out of which it is carved had, previously to its removal from Carrara, been promised by the Signory to Michelangelo, who had intended to use it for a "Hercules" or a "Samson";¹ but after the return to power of the Medici, Clement VII., much to Michelangelo's annoyance, handed it over to Bandinelli, who boasted that he could make from it a group which would surpass Michelangelo's David in excellence.² When his work was displayed it met with severe but well-merited criticism, and the wits of the day made merry over its defects. It had chanced that the marble out of which it was made had fallen into the Arno when on its way to Bandinelli's workshop, and it was alleged in an epigram that the block had tried to drown itself to avoid the disgrace which was in store for it. Another versifier wrote that the finest block of marble which had ever entered Florence had been transformed into the worst statue which was to be found there. He received no less than a hundred sonnets in disparagement of his statue. Benvenuto Cellini, somewhat later, said that he had seen in a dream Sculpture and Architecture wandering forlorn and neglected, and that finding Michelangelo old and infirm, they petitioned aid from Hercules, who replied that once he had appeared in marble at Bandinelli's request, but he had been so shamefully maltreated and disfigured on that occasion that he would visit earth no more.³ About 1522 Bandinelli made the feeble copy in marble of the Laocoon which is now in the Uffizi, and in 1540 he commenced the "heavy, unmeaning, ill-proportioned" statue of Giovanni delle Bande Nere which he never finished and which is now in the Piazza di San Lorenzo.⁴

¹ There is a wax model of a Hercules and Cacus by Michelangelo in the South Kensington Museum which was probably made when he was contemplating the use which he could make of this block (Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 439).

² Vasari, iv. 248.

³ *Life of Benvenuto Cellini* (Symonds' translation, 1888), ii. 219. Some of these witticisms may have been barbed by hatred, for Bandinelli was so vain and quarrelsome that he was universally detested.

⁴ Perkins, ii. 153.

MICHELANGELO (who has been previously mentioned as an architect) was fully aware of the natural bent of his genius. "It is only well with me," he said, "when I have a chisel in my hand."¹ It was through circumstances beyond his control—the ambition of vacillating pontiffs and the intrigues of jealous rivals—that his greatest triumphs were won in the fields of painting and architecture. And in spite of the Sistine frescoes and the dome of S. Peter's, the world has cause to lament that he was not left more free to choose his own work. Michelangelo's position among artists is so unique as to place him almost outside the pale of ordinary criticism. He "saw nothing, felt nothing, interpreted nothing, on exactly the same lines as anyone who had preceded or who followed him. His imperious personality he stamped upon the smallest trifle of his work."² He was certainly no naturalist, for while he was a close student of nature he never contented himself with merely reproducing what he saw. Nor was he a slavish imitator of the antique, for though in science and technique he equalled the Greek sculptors of the best period, even in his early works he violated their æsthetic code, and he departed further and further from classical types with advancing years.³ In a certain sense he was an idealist, but his idealism was so subjective that his creations are often strangely remote from the objects from which they sprung.⁴

His works possess two, perhaps three, characteristics which are not to be found, at least in so marked a degree, in those of any other artist.

The first and chief of these is what his contemporaries called his *terribilità*. There was an impetuosity and vehemence about the man which he imparted to his work. When he was over sixty he could knock off more chips from a block of marble in a quarter of an hour than three young stone-cutters could have done in an hour, and he attacked the marble with such fury that it seemed as if the whole block must fly to pieces.⁵ The works of no other sculptor, ancient or modern, leave a stronger impression of power upon the mind.⁶ Hence our admiration of some of his creations is accorded almost against our will. He

¹ Perkins, ii. 1.

² Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 253.

³ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 12, 28; *Ency. Brit.*, xvi. 230.

⁴ The grounds of these criticisms will be given as Michelangelo's works are noticed *seriatim*.

⁵ Blaise de Vignerot saw him do this (Clement's *Michelangelo*, p. 119).

⁶ Perkins, ii. 2.

subjugates rather than charms or beguiles.¹ The second characteristic of his works is akin to the first. He was a megalomaniac. He delighted in the colossal even when the colossal was inappropriate or displeasing. His David, in Florence, as will be seen later, is an instance in point.

It is not without hesitation that I adduce as a third characteristic of Michelangelo's sculpture its incompleteness. Were this undoubtedly intentional I should have placed it first, as it would have been distinctive of a higher order of genius than any of the qualities already mentioned. As far as I know it was first noticed by Walter Pater in his study of Luca della Robbia.² All sculptured work, he argues, has a tendency to hard realism, to be a presentment of mere form. Against this tendency all noble sculpture constantly struggles. To etherealise and spiritualise their work—to relieve it from a deadly stiffness is the universal problem which all great sculptors have to solve. The Greeks solved it by universality (*i.e.* by seeking the type in the individual); Donatello and his school by the use of low relief; Michelangelo "by leaving nearly all his sculpture in a puzzling state of incompleteness which suggests rather than realises actual form . . . and it was in reality perfect finish." In this way he gets not vitality merely, but a wonderful force of expression. This ingenious and very taking hypothesis is rejected by Symonds, who proffers another. "Michelangelo," he says, "was unwilling or unable to organise a band of craftsmen fairly interpretive of his manner. When his own hand failed, or when he lost the passion for his labour, he left the thing unfinished. And much of this incompleteness of his life's work seems to me due to his being what I called a dreamer."³ And this explanation is strengthened by the fact that Michelangelo imparted to some of his statues a very high degree of finish.⁴ These two hypotheses are not, however, of necessity mutually destructive. It may well be that Michelangelo never left any works unfinished in obedience to any preconceived intellectual theory, and yet the impulse which caused him to abandon them—which made his hand fail and deprived him of passion for

¹ Clement's *Michelangelo* (English Translation, 2nd ed.), p. 112.

² *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1893), pp. 68-72.

³ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 122.

⁴ Moreover, some of Michelangelo's paintings were also left unfinished, which cannot be accounted for by Pater's theory; and the completion of some of his statues was certainly interrupted by papal whims.

his labour—at the very point when they convey so much by suggestiveness and offend so little by hard realism, may have been the impulse of the true artist. Michelangelo was a dreamer in the sense that all poets are dreamers. When the longing to give expression to some idea in marble had been satisfied he proceeded no further with the work; and satisfaction arrived before completion, because he instinctively felt that a vague and shadowy form adequately expressed the inspiration of a dream.

In 1489 he commenced studying sculpture in the Medici gardens.¹ The incident of how Lorenzo de' Medici was struck with his youthful talent and treated him for the next three years like one of his family has already been alluded to.² The mask of a Fawn in the Bargello is said to have been the one on which he was at work when he attracted Lorenzo's notice, but it does not correspond with Vasari's description of it. If it is, we have here his first production in marble. About the year 1491 he sculptured the bas-relief of the Battle of the Centaurs, which is now in the Casa Buonarroti. Here we see for the first time not only Michelangelo's mastery over the human form, but that love of contorted attitude and violent action, which marred so much of his subsequent work. In the same collection there is another bas-relief in a very different manner of a Madonna which was executed by him about the same time. It recalls Donatello, whose manner Vasari says he imitated.

In 1492 his friend and patron Lorenzo de' Medici died, and Michelangelo was so overcome with grief that he was unable to work for several days.³ Shortly afterwards one of the priors of S. Spirito placed a room at his disposal, in which he took to dissecting dead bodies, and the study of anatomy became to him a passion, and each muscle a joy "as great as the sight of stars or flowers."⁴ But the source of this passion was not merely scientific, as is evinced by the closing lines of his beautiful sonnet on "Heaven-Born Beauty":—

"Nor hath God deigned to show Himself elsewhere
More clearly than in human forms sublime;
Which since they image Him compel my love."⁵

¹ The gardens adjoining the convent of S. Marco.

² Vasari, v. 233.

³ Clement's *Michelangelo*, p. 52.

⁴ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 42; Symonds, iii. 232.

⁵ Symonds' Translation.

In 1494, fearing political disturbances from the misrule of Piero de' Medici, he fled to Bologna, and did not return to Florence until after the expulsion of the Medici.¹ Savonarola's influence was now at its height, and Michelangelo was not insensible to it. He constantly listened to the Friar's preaching, and admired his opinions, but he never, like Botticelli or Fra Bartolommeo, let his sympathy with the *Frateschi* interrupt his work. He found in Florence a new patron in Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici (who had been banished by Piero), for whom he made a statue of S. John, which is now at Berlin. It was also about this time that he executed a sleeping Cupid, which was sold to a cardinal in Rome as an antique. In 1496 he went to Rome,² and one of his first productions after his arrival was the Bacchus, which is now in the Uffizi. This statue placed him at once ahead of all the sculptors of his day,³ but it is one of the instances of his occasional failure to grasp the inner meaning of his subject. Shelley, while recognising its technical excellence, characterised it as the most revolting mistake of the spirit of Bacchus.⁴ In 1498-1499 Michelangelo executed a work of a very different order. This was the Pietà, in the chapel of S. Maria della Febbre, in S. Peter's, which is the finest piece of modern sculpture in Rome, and one of the finest productions of his life.⁵ It is full of pathos, it has no contorted lines, and there is a dignity and repose about the whole group which make it almost Greek in character.⁶

In 1501 he was requested, by the Opera del Duomo, to make a statue of David out of a huge piece of marble in their possession, which had been roughly blocked out in 1464 for a colossal statue of one of the prophets by Agostino di Duccio, who, finding the task beyond his powers, had abandoned it. Perhaps it was the knowledge that Leonardo da Vinci and other artists had declared that the block had been spoiled by Duccio and was useless, which induced Michelangelo to accept the commission. He commenced working on it on September 13th,

¹ He was subject all his life to sudden panics when he apprehended personal danger. While at Bologna he sculptured one of the kneeling angels before the shrine of S. Domenic.

² It was there, in 1497, that he executed the beautiful Cupid which is now in the South Kensington Museum. Perkins thinks it, with one exception, his best representation in marble of a pagan subject.

³ Vasari, v. 238. ⁴ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 64. ⁵ Perkins, ii. 12.

⁶ Its draperies, however, as was often the case with Michelangelo's work, fall below the Greek standard.

1501, and the statue was finished on January 25th, 1504. Many of the most famous artists living¹ were consulted as to where it should be placed, but they could not agree, and the selection of a site was finally left to Michelangelo. At his request the statue was placed in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, where Donatello's Judith stood, and there it remained till 1873, when it was removed to the *Accademia* for protection from the weather. It took four days and much mechanical ingenuity to remove this huge figure, and when it was set up it received unstinted admiration. In its excellence of workmanship and correctness of modelling it is beyond praise.² It is full of an almost exuberant life and vigour, and in it Michelangelo first displayed that *terribilità* for which he became so famous. But it has the same grave fault as the Bacchus. It shows an entire misconception of the character of its subject. We have here a magnificent young athlete, who would have given battle to any veteran warrior, relying on naught but the strength of his own right arm. There is nothing about him which even faintly suggests the stripling who faced Goliath, strong only in his trust in the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. This false idealism is surely a more grievous sin against the first principles of art than the over-naturalness of Verrocchio's lean and wiry David, which has met with so much adverse criticism. The statue would have lost nothing had it been named a young Samson or a young Hercules. Some of Michelangelo's contemporaries must have felt this, as it was often called "The Giant." It may also be questioned whether the representation of a boy on a colossal scale is ever artistically permissible. The enthusiastic reception accorded to a work, meritorious only for perfection of execution, was a sign that popular taste in art had begun to deteriorate.

While working on the David, Michelangelo sculptured two circular reliefs of the Madonna and Child, one of which is in the Uffizi and the other in Burlington House. Both are apparently unfinished.³ At the same time he blocked out the S. Matthew which is now in the courtyard of the *Accademia*. This was all that he ever performed under a contract with the Opera del Duomo to make colossal statues of the twelve apostles

¹ Among others Filippino Lippi, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Perugino, Andrea della Robbia, Cosimo Rosselli, David Ghirlandajo, Cronaca, the brothers San Gallo, Andrea Sansovino, Granacci, Franciabigio, and Pier di Cosimo.

² Perkins, ii. 17.

³ Perkins, ii. 21.

for the Cathedral. The marble statue of the Madonna and Child in Notre Dame at Bruges also belongs to this period.¹

Early in 1505 Michelangelo was summoned to Rome by Pope Julius II. to aid in the execution of the vast schemes for the improvement of the Eternal City that were floating in the Pope's brain. What Condivi calls "the tragedy of the Julian tomb" now began.² The story of this abortive attempt on the part of the Pope to perpetuate his memory by a monument, larger and more sumptuous than the world has ever seen, belongs to Roman history, but it had such a malignant bearing on Michelangelo's career, and its consequences on the world at large were so far-reaching, that it requires a brief notice. According to the first design the tomb was to have been a rectangular erection, 34½ feet long and 23 feet wide, adorned with more than forty statues, and it was to have been placed like a ciborium in the tribune of S. Peter's. It was considered, however, by the Pope, that such a monument would be out of character with the old basilica, the destruction of which was consequently forthwith commenced.³ The rebuilding of this church "did more injury to ancient classic remains than ten centuries of so-called barbarism,"⁴ and its enormous cost certainly hastened the Reformation, and may have been one of its contributory causes.⁵

This tomb was like a millstone about Michelangelo's neck for the next forty years of his life. He was compelled to execute no less than five designs for it, each one on a smaller scale than its predecessor.⁶ It led to the loss of his time, money, and peace of mind. He was constantly being called on by the representatives of Julius to perform his engagement (which he was ever anxious to do) and impeded from performing it by the

¹ Vasari (vol. v. p. 243) mentions a bronze relief of a Madonna which Michelangelo made at this time for some Flemish merchants. This work is lost, or Vasari confused it with the marble statue at Bruges.

² Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 127. Condivi and Vasari were the only two of Michelangelo's contemporaries who wrote his biography. Symonds considers Condivi's narrative the most reliable.

³ "No more wanton or barbarous act of destruction was ever deliberately committed" (Creighton, v. 95). The old basilica had been pronounced unsafe in 1447, but there is no reason to believe that it was past repair (Lanciani's *Ancient Rome*).

⁴ Numberless classic buildings were levelled to the ground to provide marble for the new church.

⁵ Through the increased sale of indulgences. The present S. Peter's cost over £10,000,000.

⁶ A description of these designs is given in Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 128-144.

demands of successive popes. "Every day," he once exclaimed, "I am stoned as though I had crucified Christ. My youth has been lost, bound hand and foot to this tomb."¹ And the only result, after half a lifetime of worry and embarrassment, was the unpleasing and comparatively insignificant monument which now stands in the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli, a thing which Condivi well describes as "patched together and hashed up."² No one would visit this church to see this tomb but for the Moses which crowns it—a colossal statue which was intended by Michelangelo to be one of eight in his original design. Here it is altogether out of place, and entirely dwarfs the structure which supports it. It is not the figure of the meekest of men, or of the thoughtful law-giver, but of a frowning giant with a face full of suppressed wrath. It is the Moses who dashed the tables of stone to the ground, or the Moses of the desert of Zin, when about to exclaim, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" The two allegorical figures beneath the central statue—contemplative and active life—which were begun by Michelangelo and finished by Montelupo, are said to have been suggested by the Rachael and Leah of the Purgatorio.³

There are also eight statues in existence more or less finished, which are supposed to have been made from time to time for one or other of the rejected plans. Six of these are in Florence, namely the Victory and the dying Adonis in the Bargello, and the four rough-hewn male figures in the Boboli Gardens. The two others, which were certainly made for the Julian tomb, are the two bound captives in the Louvre, one of which is of great beauty.

When Michelangelo had signed the contract for the first tomb he went to Carrara, where he wasted eight months in the marble quarries.⁴ Shortly after his return to Rome he thought that the Pope's interest in the tomb had waned. The fact is that Julius's mind was preoccupied with his foreign policy which was draining his exchequer, and he found demands for money for the monument troublesome.⁵

¹ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, iii. 400. ² *Ibid.*, ii. 78. ³ *Ibid.*, i. 337.

⁴ No less than thirty-four shiploads of marble were despatched.

⁵ Michelangelo himself attributed the changed attitude of the Pope towards him to another cause. "All the dissensions between Pope Julius and me," he wrote, "arose from the enmity of Bramante and Raffaello da Urbino, and this was the cause of my not finishing the tomb in his lifetime. They wanted to ruin me" (Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 153). There is no doubt that Bramante was his enemy, and that he had tried to persuade the Pope that it would bring him bad luck if he built his tomb in his lifetime.

One morning in April, 1506, Michelangelo was somewhat brusquely refused admittance to the Pope's presence, so fearing that his employment was going he sold his goods and fled to Florence, nor could special messengers from the Pope or briefs to the Florentine Signory constrain him to return.¹ It was not till November that he could be persuaded to make his peace with the Pope, who was then at Bologna. There he remained for more than a year, during which time he modelled and cast in bronze a colossal statue of Julius II., which was destroyed in a revolution in 1511.²

In 1508 Michelangelo returned to Florence, and was about to commence a colossal statue of Hercules slaying Cacus, which was to be a pendant to his David, but the Pope required his services in Rome where, much against his will, he was set to decorate the Sistine Chapel. It was not till after the death of Julius II., in 1512, that he again took a chisel in his hand, and from 1513 to 1515 he was once more at work on the Julian tomb. In the latter year he was forced to discontinue it at the bidding of Pope Leo X., who desired the glorification of his own family rather than that of his predecessor.³ Michelangelo's connection with the abortive project to erect a façade at San Lorenzo, and the more fortunate one to reconstruct its sacristy, have been noticed. When the latter building had been completed in 1524 he commenced the famous Medici tombs, on which he laboured more or less incessantly, except while engaged on the defences of Florence (1529-1530), for the next ten years. These are not only his greatest achievement out of Rome, but they are the greatest sculptural works of his life. The two members of the Medici family to whom these monuments were erected are Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, and Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, the son and grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent. The tombs consist of colossal statues of the two Dukes, seated in niches, but executed with so little regard to portraiture that their identity is question-

¹ It is said that he also thought that Bramante was plotting to assassinate him.

² The destruction of this statue was a great misfortune as it must have been a success. Michelangelo must have thoroughly understood Julius, for in spite of their differences there was much similarity between the two men. Both were impulsive, headstrong, and in their several spheres of action, men of colossal ideas.

³ It is said that Bramante, who had been disappointed at the success of the Sistine frescoes, urged Leo to employ Michelangelo in order that he might be sent out of Rome.

able.¹ Beneath the niches are two sarcophagi, on the sloping sides of each of which recline two allegorical figures. In the general design may be seen the operation of many influences—Religion, Paganism, Naturalism—and yet it belongs to no school, but is only Michelangesque.²

The whole conception is symbolical, and its inner meaning can only be in part with certainty interpreted. The statue which is supposed to represent Lorenzo (called *Il Penseroso*) personifies Thought, and that of Giuliano, Action. The recumbent figures below Lorenzo, symbolise Dawn and Twilight; those below Giuliano, Night and Day. Mental suffering so deep and hopeless was never expressed before in marble as on Lorenzo's face, and the heart of every one of the figures is sorrow-laden. Grief for the destruction of Florentine liberty by the Medici is one of the interpretations which has been assigned to the two groups.³ But the bent of Michelangelo's mind was artistic and not political, and it is more probable that his conception was less concrete.⁴ Another explanation offered, it is said, on the strength of some of Michelangelo's own words, is that the design expresses the commonplace and ignoble conceit of the powers of earth and heaven lamenting the death of princes, but this is altogether inconsistent with what we know of Michelangelo's character.⁵ It seems more probable that the ever-varying phases of man's life, the forces which work out the destiny alike of prince and peasant, was his meaning.⁶ With regard to what Michelangelo himself saw in one of the figures there is happily no room for conjecture. When the statue of Night was first exposed to view it gave rise to two verses, of which the following is a fairly close translation. Giovan Battista Strozzi wrote :—

This stone an angel touched and Night arose,
Then laid her down to sleep in graceful pose ;
But sleeping still she lives. Touch her and see
Her eyelids lift, and hear her speak to thee.

¹ The statues appear cramped in their niches, and there is reason to believe that Michelangelo executed them by eye without having taken the trouble to measure the niches (Heath Wilson's *Life of Michelangelo*, 1881, 389, note).

² In form it is a Renaissance development of the old *quattrocento* canopied tomb.

³ Symonds (iii. 416) regards them as a series of abstractions.

⁴ Heath Wilson's *Life of Michelangelo*, 2nd ed., pp. 389-393. The elaborate explanation there offered shows that the writer was altogether unacquainted with Giuliano's life or character.

⁵ *Ency. Brit.*, xvi. 234. Michelangelo's words are not quoted.

⁶ Clement's *Michelangelo*, p. 109.

To this Michelangelo replied :—

'Tis sweet to sleep, more sweet to be of stone
While wrongs endure and suffering mortals moan.
No pangs I feel, no sin or shame I know,
Then wake me not—for pity's sake speak low.¹

Whatever the true interpretation of the groups as a whole may be, it is impossible to deny their fascination. The vagueness of the symbolism, enhanced by the vagueness of execution, impresses the imagination with a sense of mystery, and the intellect with a sense of power in reserve. Here, if anywhere, Michelangelo solved the great sculpture-problem by intentionally leaving his work unfinished.

It must have been while he was completing the Medici tombs that he executed the beautiful statue of Apollo which is now in the Bargello.² He began it, Vasari tells us, "in order to ingratiate himself with Baccio Valori," who was all powerful in Florence for a short time, immediately after the fall of the city, in 1530. He did little, if any, more Sculpture during the remainder of his life, which was spent in Rome and devoted to Painting and Architecture.

PAINTING

Florentine Painting was maintained at much the same high level which it had reached during the lifetime of Lorenzo for some years after his death. Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, and others who had helped to raise it to a plane which it had never before attained, were still living, and their ranks had been recruited by men whose names are even more famous—Raphael, Michelangelo, Andrea del Sarto—who completed, at least in the development of technical excellence, whatever their forerunners had left unfinished. In the hands of this latter group Renaissance Painting reached its high-water mark, and in their hands it also began to sink. Their early works were distinguished by some of the vivifying power of the Giotteschi, expressed in a perfection of form after which the Giotteschi had

¹ The original is of exceptional beauty :—

Caro mi è il sonno, è più l'esser di sasso ;
Mentre che il danno e la vergogna dura
Non veder, non sentir m'è gran ventura ;
Però non mi destar, deh parlo basso.

² It is not certain that it was intended for Apollo. Possibly it was a Slave or a S. Sebastian (Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 445 ; Horner, ii. 273).

striven in vain; but in their later works signs of the coming decadence made their appearance. Realism began to stifle Idealism. The symbol was often regarded as of more importance than the thing signified. And this was even more noticeable in the productions of artists of second rank, such as Pontormo, Bronzino, Bacchiacca, and Rossi.

It has already been pointed out that the decay of Renaissance Painting may be said to have commenced about 1570, and continued for about a century. This is true of Italy as a whole, for Painting was maintained at its zenith by the Venetian school until the date mentioned. In many places, however, the decay began earlier, and earliest of all in Florence, where it was not a gradual process, as elsewhere, but a sudden collapse. Florentine Painting may be said to have ended with the death of Lorenzo di Credi in 1537, for no painter of even third-rate importance appeared after that date. This was owing in part to the exhaustion occasioned by the siege, and in part to the fact that her two greatest artists had both forsaken her. Michelangelo had settled in Rome, and Leonardo da Vinci in Milan. The proselytes of the one were hastening the degradation of their art in the South, while the pupils of the other (chief among whom was Luini) were retarding it in the North. Thus Florence, where Renaissance Painting had been born, continued through her children to influence it for good and evil till its death.

BOTTICELLI did not do much work during the later years of his life. The Annunciation, in the Uffizi, is said by his latest biographer to have been painted about 1499,¹ and the Nativity (now in our own National Gallery) is dated 1500. If Meyer is right, the Coronation of the Virgin, which some critics assign to 1480, was also painted in 1500. The Calumny of Apelles (in the Uffizi) is said to be one of his later works.² Some of his undated works may of course have been executed during this period. Botticelli's possible connection with the art of copper-plate engraving has already been mentioned. If he ever executed any engravings on woodblocks it was probably between 1490 and 1508, when that art was at its zenith in Florence. There is, however, no woodcut in existence which can unquestionably be assigned to his hand.³ It is not even certain whether he was in

¹ Plunkett's *Sandro Botticelli*, p. 22. This is one of the numerous works ascribed to Botticelli which Morelli and Berenson allege are not genuine.

² Berenson, p. 107.

³ Ottley's *History of Engraving*, i. 415.

the habit of supplying engravers with designs, nevertheless his influence was felt over the whole field of Florentine engraving more than that of any other artist. Why the later years of his life were not prolific is uncertain. He remained one of the *Piagnoni*, and it is not unlikely that his religious opinions became more fanatical with advancing years, and that he had conscientious scruples about pursuing his vocation. He was very poor in his old age, and he would have starved but for the liberality of the Medici and other friends.¹ He died May 17th, 1510, and was buried in the church of the Ognissanti.

FILIPPINO LIPPI returned to Florence from Rome in 1493. In 1495 he painted an altar-piece for S. Francesco del Palco at Prato, which is now in Munich, and in 1496 the Adoration of the Magi as an altar-piece for the church of S. Donato el Scopeto at Florence, now in the Uffizi, which contains portraits of certain members of the Medici family.² There are signs of haste in the latter work and it is, for this and other reasons, inferior to his earlier productions.³ The Madonna between SS. Jerome and Domenic, now in our own National Gallery, which was painted for the Rucellai chapel in S. Pancrazio, may, from the similarity of its style to the two latter works, be assigned to this period.⁴ There is a fresco of a Madonna and four saints in a tabernacle at the end of the Via S. Margherita at Prato which, though painted by Filippino in 1498, is in his simplest and best manner. Few faces more expressive of tenderness, modesty, and dignity than that of the Virgin have ever been painted. Although more human than some of Fra Angelico's creations, she is no less "divinely fair."⁵ His last work in Florence, of which the date is known, was the decoration of one of the Strozzi chapels in S. Maria Novella, with frescoes of legendary incidents in the lives of S. Philip and S. John, which were finished in 1502.⁶ These paintings have been much injured by restoration, but the deterioration of Filippino's style is sadly apparent.⁷

¹ Vasari, ii. 236.

² Pierfrancesco, the grandfather, and Giovanni, the father, of Giovanni delle Bande Nere; also another Pierfrancesco who was probably the cousin (and not the brother as stated by Vasari) of Giovanni delle Bande Nere (Litta).

³ Crowe and Cav., ii. 445.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 451.

⁵ The blue of the Virgin's robe has been scraped off on account, it is said, of the value of the ultramarine with which it was painted (Vasari, ii. 277, note).

⁶ Berenson's *Florentine Painters*, p. 122.

⁷ Crowe and Cav., ii. 449. This work is highly praised by Vasari for its realism.

A Deposition, painted for the church of the Annunziata, and now in the *Accademia*, unfinished at the time of his death, was completed by Perugino.¹ The authenticity of a Holy Family attributed to him in the catalogue of the Pitti Palace is now discredited, but the Death of Lucretia in the same gallery may be his work.²

He died in 1505, and was buried on April 13th in the church of S. Michele Bisdomini. "While the funeral procession was passing, all the shops in the Via de' Servi were closed, as is done for the most part at the funerals of princes only."³ His portrait by himself is in the Uffizi.

LEONARDO DA VINCI, as has been noticed, took up his abode in Milan in or before 1487, and resided there till the end of the century. It was then that the famous "Last Supper"—the first masterpiece of the perfected Renaissance—a work which is still ranked as the third finest picture in the world, was executed.⁴ Early in 1501 he was in Florence, but he soon left it to take service, as an engineer, under Cesare Borgia. He returned, however, in 1503, and remained in Florence for three years. It was then that he received a commission to paint an altar-piece for the Annunziata. For this he executed the splendid cartoon in black and white of a Madonna, which is now in Burlington House, but he made no further progress with the work, and the monks, losing patience, transferred the commission to Filippo Lippi.

The next important work which he undertook was a mural painting for the new Council Hall, but with this, as with the Madonna for the Annunziata, he got no further than the design. The subject he chose was the battle of Anghiari, a cartoon of which he completed in 1505. He commenced forthwith a wall-painting from this design, and he hoped to make his colours permanent by some technical process, analogous to that of enamelling, which he had devised. He had not, however, proceeded far before it was evident that this method was a complete failure, and his mortification was so great that he abandoned the work. The cartoon has unfortunately perished, but we know some little about it, not only from the descriptions of those who

¹ Vasari, ii. 283.

² Crowe and Cav., 450. Mr. Berenson (*Florentine Painters*, pp. 121, 122) attributes to him a S. Mary of Egypt and S. John the Baptist (in the *Accademia*), an Allegorical Subject (in the Pitti), and an Old Man (in the Uffizi), which are not ascribed to him in the official catalogues.

³ Vasari, ii. 284.

⁴ Symonds, iii. 326.

had seen it, but from a few of Leonardo's preliminary sketches and copies of isolated scenes in it.¹ When it was on view, together with one by Michelangelo for a fresco for another wall in the same hall, it was admired and studied by Raphael² and other artists of the day, to whom, it is said, the two cartoons appeared as much a new revelation of what Art could do, as did the frescoes in the Brancacci chapel to Masaccio's followers at the beginning of the last century. Judging from the accounts of those who saw it, "the tumultuous entanglement of men and horses, and the expressions of martial fury and despair, must in this case have been combined and rendered with a mastery not less commanding than had been the looks and gestures of soul's perplexity and dismay among the peaceful company on the convent wall at Milan."³

It was between 1500 and 1505 that Leonardo painted the celebrated portrait of the wife of Zanobi del Giocondo (known as Mona Lisa or La Gioconda) which is now in the Louvre. Between 1505 and 1514 Milan was his principal home, but he paid occasional visits to Florence. Science now seems to have occupied most of his attention, but he did not entirely neglect painting.⁴ He left Milan, owing to its disturbed condition, and it is not unlikely that jealousy of Michelangelo prevented his taking up his abode in Florence. In 1516 he went to France, where he died on May 2nd, 1519.

Modern critics maintain that only eight or nine authentic paintings by Leonardo are in existence, and they deny the genuineness of every one of his works in Florence, excepting the unfinished panel of the Adoration of the Magi in the Uffizi.⁵ The very beautiful Annunciation, assigned to him in the Uffizi

¹ The subject of the cartoon is generally known as "The Battle of the Standard," from an incident in the foreground which was engraved by Edelinck from a Flemish copy (Vasari, vi. 157). The engraving is reproduced in Kugler's *Handbook of Painting* (1855), ii. 286.

² A sketch by Raphael of an incident in this battle-piece is in the Christ Church Library at Oxford.

³ Sidney Colvin (*Ency. Brit.*, xiv. 459). Vasari, who had seen the cartoon, writes in glowing terms of its power.

⁴ It was at this time that the *Vierge aux Rochers* in our National Gallery and its replica in the Louvre, as well as a *Madonna* in the Louvre, were painted.

⁵ Berenson, p. 121; Morelli, p. 177; *Ency. Brit.*, xiv. 461. There can be no doubt that the head of the Medusa and the portrait of Leonardo in the Uffizi are not by his hand (*The Cicerone*, p. 112; Vasari, vi. 153, 155). Lafenestre ascribes four pictures in the Uffizi and one in the Pitti to Leonardo.

catalogue and certainly not unworthy of him, is by Mündler ascribed to Lorenzo di Credi, and by Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle to Ridolfo Ghirlandajo.¹

PERUGINO set up a studio in Florence in 1492 or 1493, and it is from this time that "we date the great series of pictures in which he seems to carry to their deepest depths the expression of devotion, of self-sacrifice, of holy grief."² The large fresco of the Crucifixion in S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, which is perhaps his *chef d'œuvre*, was ordered in 1493 and completed in 1496. The landscape background is simple but exquisitely lovely, and fulfils all the conditions required by religious art.³ The subject, painful enough in the hands of many a master, is here so treated that it impresses the mind with a "peace that passeth all understanding." What Ruskin says of Perugino's works generally is emphatically true of this one. "Every colour is lovely and every space is light. The world, the universe, is divine; all sadness is a part of harmony, and all gloom a part of peace."⁴

It was at this time that Perugino executed many works for a beautiful church and convent of the Jesuits, which stood outside the Porta Pinti, and was destroyed when Florence was besieged. All of his frescoes in these buildings perished, but three panel pictures were saved, namely, Christ on the Mount of Olives, and a Pietà, both of which are in the *Accademia*, and a Crucifixion which is in the church of S. Calza. In 1494 he painted the portraits of two Vallombrosan Friars, and about 1495 a Crucifixion (all now in the *Accademia*), and in the latter year a Pietà with a beautiful landscape background (in the Pitti).⁵ No date has been assigned to the Magdalen (No. 42) or the two Madonnas (Nos. 219 and 340) in the Pitti, which are ascribed to him.⁶ After 1498 his style began to deteriorate. He worked in more haste, and he employed pupils more largely.⁷ In 1499 he went to Perugia where he executed the celebrated frescoes in the Sala del Cambio. In 1500 he returned to

¹ *The Cicerone*, p. 116.

² *Ibid.*, p. 93.

³ Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1888), ii. 209-211.

⁴ *Ariadne Florentina* (1886), p. 266.

⁵ The beautiful Madonna painted for the Certosa at Pavia, which is now in the National Gallery, probably belongs to this period. "It raises our National Gallery from a second-rate to a first-rate collection" (Ruskin's *Notes on the Turner Gallery*, p. 89, note).

⁶ The authenticity of Nos. 42 and 219 has been questioned by Mr. Berenson (*Central Italian Painters*).

⁷ Crowe and Cav., iii. 230; *The Cicerone*, p. 93.

Florence and painted the Assumption which is in the *Accademia*; in 1505 he finished the Deposition in the same gallery which Filippino Lippi had commenced; and in the following year he executed the Assumption in the SS. Annunziata. In this picture he reproduced figures from his earlier works, on account of which he was much ridiculed by "the new artists."¹ He took these censures much to heart, and Florence ceased to be his permanent home. In 1506 he was in Perugia and in 1507 in Rome. He was once more in Florence for a short time in 1510, after which his movements are difficult to follow.² He died of the plague at Fontignano in 1524.³

LORENZO DI CREDI was living during the whole of this period, and some of his works already mentioned may belong to it. It is probable, however, that it was not as productive as his earlier years, for he became one of Savonarola's disciples.⁴ His studies from the nude were, with his consent, destroyed at the burning of the Vanities in 1497. One of his late works is a S. Michael, in the sacristy of the Duomo, which was executed about 1523. He resided in Florence all his life, and his opinion on matters of taste was much esteemed by his fellow-citizens. He and Perugino were asked to advise on the contemplated completion of the façade of the Duomo in 1491; on the restoration of the lantern in 1498; as to the site of Michelangelo's David in 1504; and as to the value of Gherardo's mosaics in 1505.⁵

PIERO DI COSIMO worked on in Florence till his death in 1521. Like Filippino Lippi he was an adept at devising spectacles and organising carnival processions; and he sometimes supplied not only the requisite decorations but the words and music.⁶ His greatest success on such occasions was grim enough in its conception. It represented the "Triumph of Death," and it filled the whole city with mingled sensations of terror and admiration.⁷ It probably took place during the carnival of 1511, and it was

¹ Vasari, ii. 322.

² He worked at Citta del Pieve, Foligno, Spello, Trevi, and Perugia. There is a fresco of the Nativity in our National Gallery, executed at Fontignano in 1522, which shows the deterioration in his style.

³ Mr. Berenson attributes to Perugino the portrait of a lady (No. 1120) in the Uffizi which is officially ascribed to Raphael (*Central Italian Painters*, p. 163); and Morelli attributes to him the Portrait of a Nun, in the Pitti, which is officially ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci (*Italian Painters*, 1892, p. 101).

Vasari, iii. 149. ⁵ Crowe and Cav., iii. 507. ⁶ Vasari, ii. 423.

⁷ The spectacle is minutely described by Vasari, vol. ii. pp. 416-418.

supposed at the time to be an allegorical prediction of the return of the Medici.¹

Piero assisted Cosimo Rosselli with his frescoes in the churches of S. Ambrogio and S. Spirito, and in the latter church there is an Assumption which may be by him alone.² Four pictures (in the Uffizi) relating to the rescue of Andromeda are very characteristic of his manner. A Madonna between six Saints in the same gallery, and a Holy Family in the Spedale degli Inno-centi, are among the best of his sacred pictures,³ in the last of which the influence of Filippino Lippi is discernible.⁴

Bartolommeo di Pagholo del Fattorino, known as Baccio della Porta⁵ by his contemporaries, and as FRA BARTOLOMMEO (1475-1517) by posterity, is a painter who is greatly admired by all who appreciate excellencies of technique. It has been said that he raised the level of Italian Art a step higher; and left nothing but the last polish to be given by Raphael.⁶ He excelled in composition, in perspective, in skilful handling of draperies, and, above all, as a colourist.⁷ But he lacked individuality, and his works do not attract like those of many of his less accomplished predecessors. He studied painting under Cosimo Rosselli, in whose *bottega* he became acquainted with Mariotto Albertinelli, and a close friendship sprung up between the two fellow-pupils.⁸ The young friends worked together in partnership, often at one and the same picture, from 1491 to 1499.

About 1495 Fra Bartolommeo came under the influence of Savonarola, and henceforth was one of the Friar's most devoted followers. His earliest authentic work is a portrait of Savonarola, which must have been executed before 1496.⁹ In the following year, like Lorenzo di Credi, he cast all his studies from the nude into the bonfire of Vanities, and in May, 1498, he aided in

¹ If so, the symbolism is very obscure.

² Morelli (p. 120) does not think that Piero had a hand in any of these works.

³ *The Cicerone*, p. 65.

⁴ Morelli, p. 119. Mr. Berenson (p. 131) attributes other works in Florence, as well as La Bella Simonetta at Chantilly, to Piero.

⁵ So called from the proximity of his home to the Porta San Pier Gattolino.

⁶ Crowe and Cav., iii. 438.

⁷ He was the first artist who used lay-figures with joints (*Ency. Brit.*, iii. 194).

⁸ Albertinelli was a member of the *Arrabbiati* party, but this did not interfere with his friendship for Fra Bartolommeo.

⁹ It was in the possession of Signor Rubieri in 1866 (Crowe and Cav., iii. 433).

structures,¹ nor can one of its buildings be considered a first-rate specimen of Renaissance Architecture, or of equal merit to many of those with which Peruzzi, San Michele, and Sansovino, were at this very time beautifying Venice, Verona, Bologna, Siena, and Rome. It is true that during the first two decades of the sixteenth century, while Giuliano da San Gallo and Cronaca were at work, hardly any deterioration in taste is discernible in Florentine architecture; but in 1520 Baccio d'Agnolo designed "the last of the good and the first of the bad" palaces in Florence² and, a few years later, Michelangelo sowed in the San Lorenzo Sacristy and the Laurentian Library seeds which blossomed into the barocco. The decadence of Renaissance Architecture, though it commenced earlier, proceeded more gradually in Florence than in other parts of Italy, and its final collapse was not so complete there as elsewhere.

Soon after the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, GIULIANO DA SAN GALLO built the large, but not otherwise remarkable, church of S. Maria delle Carceri at Prato. In 1495 he went to Loreto, and thence to Rome, but being disappointed that Bramante was appointed architect of S. Peter's instead of himself, he returned to Florence. There he built, in 1501, the Palazzo Gondi, a good specimen of Florentine domestic architecture.³ He also designed the *cortile* of the church of S. M. Maddalena de' Pazzi, but whether before or after his visit to Rome is uncertain.⁴ He did much work as a military engineer during the war with Pisa (1504-1509). About 1514 he went once more to Rome, and for a few months he was joint architect of S. Peter's with Raphael, but resigned the appointment through failing health. He returned to Florence, and died there in 1517.

ANTONIO DA SAN GALLO (1448-1534) was a younger brother of Giuliano, with whom he often worked in partnership. The central arch of the portico of the Annunziata, and the building on the right of the church with its graceful *loggia*, are said to be his work. They were built between 1513 and 1520. Like his brother, he was a skilful military engineer.⁵

¹ Owing perhaps to the unsettled state of political affairs.

² The Palazzo Antinori. Fergusson's *History of Modern Architecture* (1862), p. 88.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 86; Horner, i. 275. It may have been commenced before 1492.

⁴ Richa, i. 321.

⁵ He aided his brother in the erection of the Panciatichi palace, which was built probably before 1492. His finest work out of Florence is the church of

Of Fra Bartolommeo's friend and sometime partner MARIOTTO ALBERTINELLI (1474-1515) mention has already been made. The intimacy between the two men was very close in spite of dissimilarity of character and opinions. The one was serious-minded and devout, the other gay and pleasure-loving. Fra Bartolommeo belonged to the *Frateschi*, while Mariotto was one of the *Arrabbiati*. Nevertheless Mariotto's grief at separating from his friend was so great that he would himself have become a monk but for his hatred of the religious orders.¹

The best work which he executed alone is undoubtedly the Visitation in the Uffizi, painted in 1503, the composition of which "is simple but grand; the expression of the figures noble; the execution vigorous; it is worthy of the greatest masters."² The Holy Family in the Pitti was painted about the same time; his Crucifixion in the Certosa, near Florence, in 1506; and his Annunciation in the *Accademia*, in 1510. In very few of the pictures executed during the second partnership (1510-1512) can the hand of Albertinelli be distinguished from that of Fra Bartolommeo.³ After this partnership was dissolved, Albertinelli set up as an innkeeper, but finding the work uncongenial, he resumed his pencil, and executed numerous pictures of all kinds in the houses of Florentine citizens. The only other works of his (besides those already mentioned), now to be seen in Florence, are a Trinity and a Madonna, in the *Accademia*; a Holy Family in the Palazzo Corsini; and an Annunciation in the S. Maria Nuova.⁴

ANDREA DEL SARTO (1486-1531), "the tailors' Andrew," was so called from the occupation of his father.⁵ "At length we have come," says Vasari, "after having written the lives of many artists who have been distinguished, some for colouring, some for design, and some for invention; we have come, I say, to the truly excellent Andrea del Sarto, in whom art and nature com-

¹ Vasari, ii. 465.

² Milanese's edition of Vasari, iv. 229, note. Morelli thinks that in it Albertinelli "nearly approaches Fra Bartolommeo"; I venture to think that in point of vigour he surpasses him.

³ Crowe and Cav., iii. 486, 489. Some of his works of this period are in Rome and Siena.

⁴ Lafenestre, p. 321. The last is not included in Mr. Berenson's list of his works.

⁵ His surname has been erroneously given as Vannucchi. His real name in full was "Andrea d'Agnola di Francesco di Luca di Paolo del Megliore" (Bryan's *Dictionary of Painters*, 1886, i. 36).

bined to show all that may be done in painting, when design, colouring, and invention unite in the same person."¹ This accurately expresses the opinion which was held of Andrea by his contemporaries, who considered him, as a painter, faultless (*un pittore senza errori*). Even Michelangelo, who was sparing in his praise of rivals, is reported to have said of him to Raphael, "There is a little fellow in Florence who will bring the sweat to your brow if ever he is engaged on great works."² None the less, we in these latter days, are disposed to give him a somewhat lower place. He belongs to a class who will always be ranked higher by the professional than by the non-professional critic. His productions may in the eye of an expert be faultless, but, like many faultless creations in and out of the world of art, they are insipid. Like Ghirlandajo, and still more like Fra Bartolommeo, his knowledge of his art and his skill as a craftsman far exceeded his originaive faculties. He speaks to us in well-chosen words and rounded sentences, but they are not "winged words" and rarely fly straight to the heart.

After a short apprenticeship to a goldsmith he became the pupil of Piero di Cosimi. He studied Masaccio's and Ghirlandajo's frescoes, as well as Leonardo da Vinci's and Michelangelo's cartoons for mural decorations in the Palazzo Vecchio. His earliest works are the frescoes in the *cortile* of SS. Annunziata, representing miracles of S. Fillipo Benizzi, painted in 1509-1510. They at once brought him into notice. In the same place, and in the following year, he painted the Adoration of the Magi.³ In 1512 he married Lucrezia del Fede, the widow of a hatter named Recanati, of whom he had been enamoured during her husband's lifetime. She was a strikingly handsome and fascinating woman, but also (if Vasari may be trusted) a heartless coquette and a virago. She abused and beat her husband's pupils, her conduct occasioned him torments of jealousy, and she made him support the whole of her family.⁴ Nevertheless he remained her humble and very willing slave for the whole of his life, and her type of face, with or without intention, he

¹ Vasari, iii. 180.

² *Ency. Brit.*, xxi. 316.

³ It contains Andrea's own portrait, also one of Sansovino.

⁴ Vasari was one of Andrea's pupils, and may have felt the blows of the fair Lucrezia, so, though his evidence is first hand, it is not unbiased. He admits that in spite of their ill-treatment none of the pupils left; and in the second edition of his work he omits many of the hard things which he had originally said of her. See Vasari, iii. 194, note.

henceforth reproduced in all his Madonnas.¹ In 1514 he painted the Nativity of the Virgin in the Scalzo cloister, in which he realised in fresco "what Leonardo produced in oils in the Mona Lisa."² No work of its kind had ever reached so high a level before, and Andrea was now the first fresco-painter in Italy, not excepting Raphael.³ But even here the germ of a decadence may be found. The variegated tints, which in his later works became offensive by excess, were already apparent.⁴ For a short time he worked with his friend Franciabigio, with whom he was employed by the Bare-footed Friars, to adorn the walls of the cloister of Lo Scalzo with frescoes in monochrome. Their only joint work here was that of the Baptism of Christ, which was completed in 1517. During the next nine years Andrea worked intermittently in this cloister, where he executed thirteen frescoes in the same style.⁵ In 1517 he painted for the church of S. Francesco a Madonna between SS. John the Baptist and Francis, which is known as the "Madonna delle Arpie," and is now in the Uffizi. This is generally considered his masterpiece in oils.⁶ Between 1518 and 1520 he was working for Francis I. in France, where he was being royally remunerated, but on hearing from his wife that she was disconsolate without him he persuaded the king to grant him leave of absence, and returned to Florence.⁷ In 1523 he painted a copy of Raphael's Leo X. in the Pitti, which Ottaviano de' Medici palmed off on the Duke of Mantua as the original. It was so good that Raphael's pupil, Giulio Romano, who assisted in the production of the original, was also taken in.⁸ His *chef d'œuvre* in fresco-painting was executed in 1525. It is in a lunette over a door in the cloister of SS. Annunziata, and is known as the *Madonna del Sacco*, from a sack of corn against which S. Joseph is leaning. It is in a damaged condition, but its excellence may still be traced.⁹ His last important work, executed in 1527, was

¹ Crowe and Cav., iii. 551.

² *Ibid.*, 556. The central figure in the foreground of this work is said to be a portrait of his wife.

³ *Ibid.*, 549.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 577.

⁵ Lafenestre, pp. 308-310; Berenson, p. 99.

⁶ Crowe and Cav., iii. 562.

⁷ Vasari implies that Lucrezia's grief was simulated. Andrea never returned to France, possibly because on his arrival at home he squandered on his wife and her relations a large sum of money with which the king had entrusted him for the purchase of works of art. At this time his own parents were in abject poverty (Vasari, iii. 206, note).

⁸ The copy is now in the Naples Museum.

⁹ Horner, i. 380.

the fresco of the Last Supper in the convent of S. Salvi, which, as has been stated, saved the building from destruction.¹ He remained in Florence throughout the siege, and catching the plague which broke out after it was raised, he died on January 22nd, 1531, sadly neglected by his wife, who feared infection.² There are between forty and fifty of his works to be seen in Florence. Besides those which have been mentioned, dates can approximately be assigned to the following: The Deposition, History of Joseph, Madonna and Saints (No. 123) and S. John, all in the Pitti, were completed about 1523 and 1524, and an Assumption, in the same gallery, in 1531; while the Four Saints, in the Uffizi, was executed in 1528.³

His pupil, Giovanni Antonio SOGLIANI, who assisted him for twenty-four years, never produced any work of real excellence.

MICHELANGELO'S connection with Florence, as far as extant paintings are concerned, is of the slightest, for the Holy Family in the Uffizi is the only one of his pictures which is to be seen there. He belongs, however, both by birth and training to the Florentine school. In 1488 he was apprenticed to Domenico Ghirlandajo for three years, but the engagement was prematurely terminated by mutual consent. There is a story that this was occasioned by the master's jealousy of his young pupil's precocious talent; but there may have been faults on both sides, for Michelangelo's temper "was at best but a half-smothered volcano."⁴ After leaving Ghirlandajo he made sculpture his chief study, but he did not entirely neglect his brush. He painted, however, but few easel pictures, for he regarded oil painting as an occupation fit only for women.⁵ It was not till his youth was passed that he turned his attention to fresco-work and earned his laurels as a painter. His "Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel is considered by a large (but perhaps a diminishing) number of competent critics to be the finest picture in the world.⁶

About his chief characteristic, wherein lies his great strength, there cannot be two opinions. As a painter of the nude he has never been rivalled. No one ever portrayed the human form in such endless variety of attitude. He used it to express feeling and emotion, where other artists would have relied only on the eye

¹ The sketch for this is in the University Galleries at Oxford.

² Vasari, iii. 231.

³ Crowe and Cav. and Berenson.

⁴ *Ency. Brit.*, xvi. 229.

⁵ Clement's *Michelangelo*, p. 68.

⁶ For an opposite opinion see Ruskin's *Relation between Michael Angelo and Tintoret*.

or play of feature; and he used it for decorative purposes, where others would have had recourse to arabesques. He could "produce powerful and strangely harmonious effects by means of figures in themselves open to criticism simply by his mode of placing and ordering them."¹ This he was enabled to do by his extraordinary knowledge of anatomy, but the use that he made of that knowledge was not always legitimate. Though he was unquestionably a consummate master of Painting and Sculpture, he seems to have failed to apprehend the proper limitations of the two arts. It has been said of him that he used his brush like a chisel and his chisel like a brush. That the Sistine frescoes were the work of a sculptor is abundantly evident.

His transcendent mastery over the human frame certainly proved a stumbling-block to himself and others. It often led him to sacrifice beauty to science. His greatest composition is crowded with a positive army of naked figures, whose vehement gestures and twisted limbs, leave on the mind a sense of confusion and unrest. These faults, glaring though they be, are largely redeemed by the man's tremendous power, his over-mastering individuality, which manifests itself in every line of his work.

Unfortunately, the peculiarities of his style were easily acquired, but not its sublimity. When, therefore, men of feebler brain and lesser skill imitated his manner, their productions were contemptible.² It has been often urged that Michelangelo should not be held responsible for this result.³ However this may be, it is certain that he foresaw it. "My science," he said, "will create a host of ignoramuses."⁴ There can be no doubt, had he curbed his love of anatomical display, that his own works would have been more pleasing and their influence less pernicious.

His three easel pictures, which have come down to us, were executed before he was thirty years old. The Holy Family, in the National Gallery, London, was painted about 1493;⁵ the unfinished Entombment, in the same collection, is also an early work;⁶ and the Holy Family in the Uffizi was executed for Agnolo Doni, probably in 1503. The incursions of Paganism

¹ Brücke's *Human Figure*, cited in Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 265.

² The study of his style had an injurious effect even on men of genius; e.g. Raphael and Fra Bartolommeo.

³ Clement's *Michelangelo*, 153; Perkins, i. 68; Symonds, iii. 494.

⁴ Clement's *Michelangelo*, 153. ⁵ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 15.

⁶ Symonds disputes the authenticity of this work, but it is generally admitted.

and Naturalism into the domain of Sacred Art are noticeable in all these pictures.¹ In the Holy Family in the National Gallery the customary angels are replaced by genii; in that in the Uffizi, five completely nude figures are introduced into the background,² while in the Entombment "the dead Christ was thought of only as an available subject for the display of anatomy."³

In 1503 Piero Soderini, who had been appointed gonfalonier for life, determined to adorn the Sala dei Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio, with mural frescoes. After Leonardo da Vinci had almost finished a cartoon of a subject which was to be represented on one wall, Michelangelo was commissioned in August, 1504, to decorate the opposite wall. The incident which he chose for his fresco was the surprise of some Florentine soldiers, whilst bathing, by Sir John Hawkwood's troops on July 28th, 1364. It is commonly called the "Battle of Pisa," but it occurred at Cascina, on the Arno. Michelangelo completed his cartoon of this episode in November, 1506,⁴ when it was placed on view, in the Sal del Papa at S. Maria Novella, and in 1510 it was removed to the great hall in the Palazzo Vecchio. He never even commenced reproducing it in colour, and before Vasari wrote his history in 1550 it had disappeared. Its destruction is involved in some obscurity. Vasari says⁵ that Baccio Bandinelli, out of hatred to Michelangelo, wantonly cut it into small pieces in 1512, but there are good grounds for doubting this. It seems to have been in the Casa Medici in 1513, and it is not unlikely that it was cut up by copyists and engravers, for their own use, during the illness of Giuliano de' Medici in 1516.⁶

All that we know of this cartoon is from a chiaro-oscuro transcript at Holtham, some pen-and-ink studies for single figures by Michelangelo, a sketch of the whole at Vienna, a line-engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi, known as *Les Grimpeurs*, and from descriptions of it by Vasari, Condivi, and Benvenuto Cellini. The last of these authors, who had seen it, said that Michelangelo's genius "did not rise half-way to the same pitch of

¹ That such incursions should have been furthered by so devoutly a religious man as Michelangelo is significant.

² Luca Signorelli had previously introduced the nude into a sacred picture.

³ Ruskin's *Relation between Michael Angelo and Titmore*.

⁴ It is not certain that the cartoon was quite completed, but Michelangelo worked no more on it after that date.

⁵ Vol. iv. p. 236.

⁶ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 163-166. Condivi, who is more reliable than Vasari, says, "I do not know by what ill fortune it came to ruin."

power" in the Sistine frescoes as it did here.¹ Vasari, too, lavishes on it much highflown praise, and particularises "figures hastening to the camp with their clothes in their arms, all displaying the most singular attitudes; some were standing, others kneeling or stooping forward or half-suspended between all these positions; some were falling down, others springing high in the air and exhibiting the most difficult foreshortenings."² We are enabled thus to form a pretty fair estimate of the nature of the work. It must have been here that Michelangelo's strength and weakness—his consummate skill as a draughtsman of the nude, and his overfondness for strained attitudes and impetuous motion, were first revealed. This cartoon, we are told, became the school of the world.³ It was studied by Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, R. Ghirlandajo, and many less eminent artists; and although all who copied it may, as Vasari assures us, have attained excellence in their craft, it is to be feared that its influence was baneful. The extravagance of its style became the fashion and ran riot. The work was, too, vicious in its conception. The very choice of the subject was ignoble. The incident had been selected, not because it was one of which Florence had the smallest reason to be proud, nor because it lent itself to any grand dramatic effect or even beauty in representation, but solely because it was the one best calculated for exhibiting the artist's knowledge and skill. The tendency to employ Art merely as a vehicle for displaying dexterity had no doubt set in before Michelangelo's day, but no such flagrant instance of it had hitherto been seen. For these reasons this short-lived cartoon, in spite of its unparalleled vigour, must have accelerated the ruin of Italian Art.⁴

Michelangelo did no more work with his pencil in Florence till 1529, when he painted a picture of Leda and the Swan for the Duke of Ferrara. It never reached its destination, but found its way to France in 1532, where it was ultimately lost.⁵

In 1508 he commenced, very reluctantly, to decorate the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at Rome, with a series of frescoes of scenes from the Old Testament and of prophets and sibyls, which he finished in 1512. Here his powers are seen at their best, as he paid more regard to beauty than was his wont. His celebrated fresco of the Last Judgment, in the same chapel, was

¹ *Life of Benvenuto Cellini* (Symonds' Translation, 1888), i. 26.

² Vasari, v. 244-245. ³ Cellini, cited in Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 166.

⁴ Symonds' *Michelangelo*, i. 171.

⁵ *Ibid.*, i. 441-443.

not executed till after the close of the period with which this history deals. He never married, as he said that Art was a sufficiently exacting mistress. He died in 1564.

FRANCESCO GRANACCI (1477-1543) studied painting under Domenico Ghirlandajo, and sculpture in the S. Marco gardens.¹ He gave up the style of his master for that of his friend and fellow-pupil, Michelangelo, who engaged him as an assistant when commencing the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel.² His work there did not, however, satisfy his exacting employer, and one morning he found himself locked out of the chapel.³ After this rupture between the friends, Granacci seems to have emulated the style of Raphael, as may be seen in his pictures of the Virgin giving her girdle to S. Thomas, in the Uffizi, and of the Assumption in the *Accademia*.⁴ There are other works of his in the latter gallery and in the Pitti. Much of his time was employed, in conjunction with Ridolfo Ghirlandajo, on scenic painting.⁵ A Madonna belonging to the Marchese Covoni, at Florence, is perhaps his best work.⁶

Francesco di Cristoforo Bigio, abbreviated into FRANCIABIGIO (1482-1525) was a pupil of Piero di Cosimo, Albertinelli, and Granacci. In Piero di Cosimo's studio he met Andrea del Sarto, whose style influenced him more than that of his master.⁷ He was not an artist of much originality, but his technique was so good that his Madonna del Pozzo, in the Uffizi, was for years attributed to Raphael,⁸ and some of his small predella pictures have often been confounded with those of Granacci and Pontormo.⁹ The influence of Albertinelli may be traced in Franciabigio's Madonna with Job and the Baptist (in the Uffizi), and in his Calumny of Apelles (in the Pitti); and that of Andrea del Sarto in his Sposalizio in the *cortile* of the Annunziata and in his frescoes in the chiostro dello Scalzo.¹⁰ The Sposalizio, which was painted in 1514, is considered his *chef d'œuvre*. He injured parts of it with his own hand, in a fit of rage, because the monks had uncovered it without his consent.¹¹ The Last Supper, in La Calza, at Florence, is one of his latest works.

¹ Crowe and Cav., iii. 534.

² *Ibid.*, 539.

³ Michelangelo dismissed all his assistants and finished the work alone.

⁴ Crowe and Cav., iii. 539.

⁵ Vasari, iii. 453.

⁶ Morelli, p. 100. A small picture of S. Anthony, by Granacci, in the University Gallery at Oxford, is very pleasing.

⁷ Crowe and Cav., iii. 500; Morelli, p. 98.

⁸ Lafenestre, p. 45. Morelli attributes it to Franciabigio, but Mr. Berenson does not. ⁹ Morelli, p. 100. ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 99. ¹¹ Vasari, iii. 338.

RAFFAELLINO DEL GARBO (1466-1524)¹ studied under Filippino Lippi, and there is much resemblance between their styles.² His early works are of much merit, but he did not fulfil the promise of his youth.³ His finest picture in Florence is one of SS. Catherine and Mary Magdalen adoring the Trinity, in S. Spirito.⁴ A Resurrection in the *Accademia*, a Holy Family in the Palazzo Corsini, and a SS. Ignatius and Roch in the convent of S. Maddalena de' Pazzi, are also attributed to him.⁵

GIULIANO BUGGIARDINI (1475-1554), like Granacci and Franciabigio, was a pupil of Domenico Ghirlandajo, and a student in Lorenzo's garden at S. Marco, and like them he was without much individuality of style. He was at first an imitator of Albertinelli and afterwards of Michelangelo. A Madonna of his, in the Uffizi, was at one time ascribed to Leonardo da Vinci.⁶ In his Martyrdom of S. Catherine, in S. Maria Novella, Michelangelo gave him some assistance.⁷ He painted a portrait of Michelangelo which may possibly be the one in the Louvre,⁸ and also one of Guicciardini, the historian, which was said to be in the possession of the family in 1885.⁹

RIDOLFO GHIRLANDAJO (1483-c. 1560) was a son of Domenico Ghirlandajo and possessed much of his father's talent. He was a pupil of Granacci, Piero di Cosimo, and perhaps Cosimo Rosselli. He may also have studied the works of other masters, as the influence of Raphael is visible in the portrait of a lady in the Pitti, painted in 1509, and that of Fra Bartolommeo in the Predella in the Bigallo, painted in 1515.¹⁰ He aided Raphael in painting his *Belle Jardinière*, and Raphael would have gladly found employment for him in Rome, but, like many of his compatriots, he could not live "out of sight of the Cupola."¹¹ His masterpieces are the two pictures in the Uffizi (of a miracle by S. Zenobio and the burial of the same saint) in which movement, grouping, heads, and colour are quite equal to the golden time; nevertheless some negligences in the drapery betray, by want of seriousness, the future mannerist."¹²

¹ He was a member of the Capponi family and descended from Niccolò.

² Morelli, p. 116.

³ Vasari, ii. 474.

⁴ His *chef d'œuvre* (a Madonna between two angels) is at Berlin.

⁵ Mr. Berenson only credits him with the Resurrection.

⁶ Crowe and Cav., iii. 494.

⁷ Vasari, iv. 301.

⁸ Crowe and Cav., iii. 498.

⁹ Vasari, v. 248.

¹⁰ Crowe and Cav., iii. 524, 525; Lafenestre, p. 151; Vasari, i. 4.

¹¹ This was a proverbial saying of Florentines who were too attached to their native city to leave it (Vasari, v. 4). ¹² *The Cicerone*, p. 153.

A portrait of a goldsmith in the Pitti, by Ridolfo, was for many years attributed to Leonardo da Vinci.¹ His fresco of the Annunciation in the chapel in the Palazzo Vecchio was painted in 1514. There was a marked deterioration in the style of his later works.² He was skilled in devising spectacles, and much of his time was wasted on ephemeral work, such as the painting of banners and theatrical scenery, and the erection of triumphal arches.³ In his youth he worked for a short time as a mosaicist under his uncle David.⁴

Ridolfo's pupil TOTO DEL NUNZIATA was the most distinguished Italian painter in England in the reign of Henry VIII.⁵ He became one of the king's three "serjeant painters," and did much work at court. None of his pictures can be identified, but some of those attributed to Holbein are probably his.⁶

JACOPO DA PONTORMO (1494-1556) was a gifted pupil of Andrea del Sarto, whose influence is discernible in the fine fresco of the Visitation in the cloister of the Annunziata. It is the best of his imaginative pictures, although he was only twenty-two years old when he painted it.⁷ In his later years he forsook his master's manner in his grotesque attempts to acquire a Michelangesque style, as may be seen in his Martyrdom of Forty Saints in the Pitti.⁸ It is as a portrait painter, however, that he deserves mention, for as such he holds very high rank, witness his Cosimo de' Medici in S. Marco,⁹ and Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici in the Uffizi. Like many of his contemporaries he was frequently employed in painting pageants, in which branch of his art he must have excelled, if we may judge from his mural decorations in the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano.¹⁰

His pupil ANGELO BRONZINO (?1502-1572) followed in his footsteps. The fine series of portraits which Bronzino painted, notably those of the Medici in the Uffizi, gave a character to

¹ Lafenestre, p. 149; Morelli, p. 182.

² Crowe and Cav., iii. 531. Three angels on panels, in the *Accademia*, are said to be among his early works (Berenson, p. 118).

³ Vasari, v. 11. He did work of this character on Leo X.'s visit to Florence (1515), at funerals and weddings of the Medici (1516-1519, 1539), and on the entry of Charles V. into Florence in 1536. ⁴ Vasari, v. 9.

⁵ Lanzi's *History of Painting in Italy* (1828), vol. i. p. 212.

⁶ Vasari, v. 12, note. ⁷ *The Cicerone*, p. 133. ⁸ Berenson, p. 81.

⁹ Though painted from a bust or medallion, this portrait has an historical value (Symonds, iii. 498). See also his "lady with a dog" at Frankfurt.

¹⁰ Berenson, p. 81.

court painting all over Europe, while his studies of the nude are even more unpleasing than that of his master.¹ Two other pupils of Andrea del Sarto passed through the same phases as Pontormo. These were Bacchiaccha (1494-1557) and Rosso de' Rossi (1494-1541), who, after painting in their master's style, came under the baneful influence of Michelangelo. Both are well represented in Florence.

RAPHAEL SANTI (1483-1520),² though not a Florentine by birth or entirely a member of the Florentine school, requires notice, for four important years of his life were spent in Florence, and some twenty of his pictures are to be seen there.³ Few other men of genius have ever enjoyed unfluctuating popularity for so long a period. He was considered the prince of painters by his contemporaries, and public opinion for nearly four centuries has accorded him a like position. This arises not only from the extraordinary technical excellence and breadth of imagination displayed in his works, but from their variety. He painted in three distinct styles. His first was formed under the influence of Perugino and Pinturicchio; his second under that of Leonardo da Vinci and Fra Bartolommeo; and his third under that of Michelangelo and Sebastiano del Piombo.⁴ Thus during his short life he acquired an Umbrian, a Florentine, and a Roman manner. But notwithstanding all these changes, his genius has stamped his productions with a peculiar individuality. Unlike his great rival, Michelangelo, there was nothing of the terrible about the man or his works. His genius was of the feminine rather than of the masculine order, but it was none the less effective on that account. On the contrary, the gracious persuasiveness of his creations impresses more deeply than many a manifestation of strength.

It was in 1504 that Raphael took up his residence in Florence and, with the exception of visits to Perugia, Siena, and Urbino, he remained there four years. Like many another famous Italian painter, he studied the frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel, and it was doubtless there that he first exchanged some of his Perugin-esque conventionalism for the dramatic freedom of Masaccio. One of the pictures which he painted, while a transition was

¹ Berenson, p. 82.

² "Raffaello Sanzio" he is now called by Italians.

³ Official catalogues credit him with about that number; modern critics with about twelve.

⁴ Berenson's *Central Italian Painters*, p. 170.

taking place from his first to his second manner, was the *Madonna del Gran Duca*—a work which, in the opinion of many, ranks higher than any of his later productions. It has all the sweet seriousness of the Umbrian mingled with the natural grace of the Florentine school. Other pictures by Raphael belonging to this period, now in Florence, are the *Madonna del Cardellino* and his own portrait (both in the Uffizi), the portraits of Angelo and Maddalena Doni,¹ the *Donna Gravida* and the *Madonna del Baldacchino* (all in the Pitti). The composition of the last-named work shows signs of Fra Bartolommeo's influence, but the execution is inferior, as much of it was left to Ridolfo Ghirlandajo.²

There is a fresco of the Last Supper in a house in the Via Faenza, once the convent of S. Onofrio, which bears Raphael's signature and is dated 1505, nevertheless its authenticity has been questioned.³ One of the two portraits of Vallombrosan monks, catalogued under Perugino's name in the *Accademia*, may be by Raphael.⁴

Before leaving Florence, Raphael studied Michelangelo's cartoon of the "Surprise of the Bathers," which was then on view, and no doubt by it the seeds were sown which germinated into his Roman manner. Much of the execution of his works in that manner he left to his pupils. It is questionable whether he did more than design the *Madonna dell' Impanata* and the *Vision of Ezekiel* (both in the Pitti); and the *S. John the Baptist* (in the Uffizi),⁵ and only the face in the portrait of Bernardo Dovizzi, Cardinal of Bibbiena, is by his hand.⁶ The portrait of Tommaso Inghirami, in the Pitti, Morelli thinks is a Flemish copy of an original by Raphael in the possession of the Inghirami family,⁷ and the famous portrait of the "Fornarina" the same critic

¹ In this work Morelli (p. 49) sees the influence of Leonardo da Vinci.

² *Ency. Brit.*, xx. 277. It was during this sojourn in Florence that Raphael painted the *Ansidei Madonna*, the *Bridgewater Madonna*, and the two small *Madonnas at Panshanger*. Many other works belonging to this period are to be seen out of Florence.

³ Crowe and Cavalcaselle (vol. iii. p. 248) attribute it either to Giannicola Manni or Gerino, pupils of Perugino.

⁴ Crowe and Cavalcaselle's *Life of Raphael*, i. 37.

⁵ Both of these works were probably painted by Giulio Romano and Penni (Crowe and Cavalcaselle's *Life of Raphael*, 1885, vol. ii. p. 485).

⁶ *Ibid.*, ii. 329.

⁷ But Crowe and Cavalcaselle hold (*Life of Raphael*, ii. 235) that the Pitti portrait is the original, and the one at Volterra a copy.

attributes to Sebastiano del Piombo.¹ The numerous portraits of Julius II., which are to be seen in various European galleries, catalogued under Raphael's name, are probably all copies of an original cartoon in the Corsini Palace at Florence.² Of the few pictures by Raphael in his Roman manner, which were his own handiwork, there are three fine specimens in the Pitti, namely, the Madonna della Seggiola, painted in 1513 or 1514,³ the Donna Velata,⁴ and the group of Leo X. and Cardinals Giulio de' Medici and Rossi. The two last were painted about 1517 or 1518.

The latter years of his life were spent in Rome, where his time was chiefly occupied in decorating the Vatican Stanze. These celebrated frescoes, like Michelangelo's in the Sistine Chapel, notwithstanding their excellence, show abundant signs of the coming decadence. He died of fever, after ten days' illness, on April 6th, 1520, at the early age of thirty-seven.

The fragmentary account of Italian Painting contained in the foregoing pages is not inappropriately brought to a close with the death of Raphael, for, although his works cover but a period of eighteen years, they comprise all the tendencies which moulded Renaissance Painting from its rise to its fall, and in them we may read an epitome of its history. Art in the Byzantine age was the bonds slave of Religion. Giotto emancipated her, and henceforward to the days of Fra Angelico she remained Religion's willing handmaid. With the aid of Leonardo da Vinci and Botticelli, she threw aside all semblance of servitude and established a position of equality. Finally, under the influence of Michelangelo, the quondam slave became the tyrannous mistress, and religious facts were employed for the display of art, instead of, as formerly, art being employed for the display of religious facts.⁵ These changes, effected by the spread of Humanism, are curiously mirrored in Raphael's successive styles. In his Umbrian manner Christian Idealism is predominant; in his Florentine,

¹ It is also attributed to Giorgione (*Arch. Stor. d. A.*, Ann. iv. p. 447). The authenticity of the portrait of *L'Incognita*, in the Tribune, is now generally doubted, but all critics (including the venturesome Morelli) hesitate to ascribe it to any particular master (*Ibid.*, p. 428 *et seq.*).

² Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle in their *Life of Raphael* (vol. ii. p. 104) attribute the Uffizi portrait to Penni and the Pitti portrait to Giovanni da Udine.

³ Crowe and Cav., iii.

⁴ There can be no doubt that this is the portrait (mentioned by Vasari) of the lady whom Raphael loved "sino alla morte" (E. Ridolfi, *Arch. Stor. d. A.*, Ann. iv. pp. 441-455).

⁵ Ruskin's *Modern Painters* (1888), iii. 51.

Religion and Naturalism hold an equal place; while in his Roman, Christian Idealism is subservient to Paganism and Naturalism.

This brings prominently before the mind the course which was run by Renaissance Art, and it is not surprising that its downfall should often have been attributed to its secularisation—a conclusion which, in a superficial sense, is undoubtedly true. So long as the Art of this period was sacred it was elevated, and when it became profane it became also degraded. But it is a case of *post hoc non propter hoc*. Religion is not an essential ingredient in good Art, as some critics hold,¹ nor is there anything intrinsically noxious to Art in Paganism or Naturalism, which were the constituents of Humanism. Christianity, when the sole guardian of Art, could not rescue it from Byzantine formalism. Paganism gave to the world the Parthenon frieze, and the Venus of Milo, and Naturalism gave to it the masterpieces of the Dutch school, Turner's landscapes, and a host of kindred works. The truth is that it was with Renaissance Art, as with so much that is human—its progress was occasioned by antagonism. It was the combined action of hostile forces which led it onward and upward. The rise of Paganism stimulated Christianity and gave it an artistic productiveness which it did not before possess (exemplified in Raphael's Umbrian manner); when the two energies were equally balanced, Art culminated (as in Raphael's Florentine period); and finally, when Paganism overpowered Religion, Art fell into decadence (as we see in his Roman works).

One question, however, suggests itself. Why was the third stage of artistic development so inferior to the first? Why could not Paganism stimulated by Christianity produce as good results as Christianity stimulated by Paganism? The answer is that both were becoming effete. Ecclesiastical corruption had driven Christianity, as a vital principle, north of the Alps, and the Paganism of the later Renaissance was an affectation. The Neopagan artists of the sixteenth century copied classic forms, and endeavoured to express classic myths, but they missed the inner meaning of the originals because they had not imbibed the spirit of antiquity. In a few isolated instances, where this was otherwise, the results were admirable. Botticelli and Titian, who understood the underlying motives of Greek artists, gave us the

¹ See Rio's *Poetry of Christian Art*.

"Birth of Venus" and "Sacred and Profane Love."¹ But most of their contemporaries and all their successors, by a study of antique forms, merely caught a trick of expression, and their works have only the same kind of merit as is to be found in a good parody. Of this trick they were inordinately proud and made a great parade. The pedantry of Art, in its Post-Raphaelite days, had more to do with its overthrow than its secularisation, and for this neither Paganism nor Naturalism can be held responsible. Nevertheless, pedantry was but a secondary cause. The primary cause of the decadence of Renaissance Art in Italy was that Christianity and Paganism had both become shams.

WOOD-ENGRAVING

The Art of Wood-Engraving which, as has been seen, was in use in Florence as early as 1430 for the multiplication of playing-cards and pictures of saints, was first employed for the illustration of books in 1490. From that date to 1508 the Florentine wood-engravers exercised their craft with such taste and skill that, although their productions were simple and unpretentious, they raised the art of book-illustration to a pitch of perfection which has never been equalled.² Florence, with rare discernment, confined the use of woodcuts almost exclusively to works which appeal to the imagination.³ After 1489 new editions of Dante, Boccaccio, and other standard poets were profusely illustrated, and the *Rappresentazioni* (which correspond to our own miracle plays) seldom appeared without one or two woodcuts.⁴ Doubtless the religious enthusiasm, which prevailed in the last decade of the fifteenth century, gave a stimulus to engraving on wood.⁵ Savonarola's sermons and pamphlets were printed by the thousand, and most of them contained a woodcut of much merit.

The Florentine *quattrocento* woodcuts have marked characteristics which distinguish them from those of other schools. They are generally small (about $4 \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ inches) and their design, "boldly but firmly cut is usually in outline, with dense masses

¹ In spite of its name, and whatever its meaning, this work is classical in spirit and in form.

² Lippmann, p. 18.

³ Kristeller, vol. i. p. viii.

⁴ *Bibliographica*, ii. 82. At a later date these plays were illustrated with inordinate profusion.

⁵ The religious movement which terminated in the Reformation had the same effect on wood-engraving in Germany.

of shadow obtained by leaving portions of the surface of the block untouched, so as to yield broad depths of blackness in the impression. In these dark parts, the details of the ground and the distance are cut out in white, in the style of the dotted prints (*Schrotblätter, gravures en manière criblée*)—a technical method by means of which an extremely powerful effect can be produced. Nowhere else than in Florence do we find that such a mode of treatment was adopted.”¹ The cuts were often surrounded with a highly effective border which was also distinctive of the Florentine school.² They were frequently used on the title-page, or inserted with exquisite taste in the text.³

The number of woodcuts produced in Florence between 1490 and 1508, when the art was at its zenith, is small, and but little is known of their origin. They must have issued from different workshops, as many of them have a distinctive style of their own and preserve an average standard of merit. Their comparative fewness, however, makes it probable that only a small number of workshops were engaged in their production. Monograms and signatures are of the very rarest occurrence.⁴ The influence of the great painters who were then living (especially that of Botticelli and Ghirlandajo) is clearly visible in many prints, but there is no evidence that they were in the habit of supplying the engravers with designs.⁵ Sometimes, however, the cuts were undoubtedly borrowed from well-known works of the great masters, as in the case of the *Epistole et Evangelii* (1495), some of the illustrations of which are after pictures by Verrocchio and Pollaiuolo.⁶ The same woodcuts often appear again and again in different works and, when these works are undated, it is impossible to say with certainty for which of them they had been originally cut.

The first Florentine woodcut which can be assigned to any particular date is a large view of Florence, of much historical interest, which is now in Berlin. It measures about 52 × 23 inches, and it was engraved between 1486 and 1490.⁷ Among

¹ Lippmann, p. 18.

² Some of these borders are very artistic. Cuts in the *Storia di Uberto e Filomena*, the *Storia di Bradamonte*, and the *Arte del bene morire* are reproduced in Kristeller, vol. ii. pp. 11, 13, 15.

³ *Bibliographica*, ii. 85.

⁴ Lippmann, pp. 7, 18.

⁵ The illustrations designed by Botticelli in the Landino Dante were copper-plates and not woodcuts.

⁶ Kristeller, vol. i. p. xiv.

⁷ A reduced facsimile is given in Lippmann before p. 33.

the most important illustrated books that appeared during the golden age of wood-engraving, the following are deserving of mention. The *Laudi* of Jacopone da Todi,¹ and the *Specchio di Croce* of Domenico Cavalca (both dated) appeared in 1490, and Capranica's *Ars Moriendi* (undated) was probably issued in the same year.

Bellini's *Monte Santo di Dio*, which first appeared with copperplate engravings in 1477, was republished in 1491 with the same illustrations, printed from woodblocks, but not slavish copies of the originals. These woodcuts are fine specimens of the Florentine technique, and their designs suggest Filippino Lippi's influence.²

Two of Savonarola's Tracts, the *Amore di Iesu Christo* and *Umiltà*, and Landino's *Formulare di Lettere* appeared in 1492.³ The two former were printed by Miscomini, from whose press innumerable editions of Savonarola's sermons issued.⁴ Miscomini also printed in the following year an illustrated edition of Jacopo di Cessoli's celebrated *Giuoco di Scacchi* (Game of Chess).⁵ In 1495 the *Epistole et Evangelii*, which has been already referred to, appeared. It contained some 200 illustrations, many of which had been engraved for Savonarola's sermons. It went through many editions between 1495 and 1578. Luigi Pulci's *Morgante Maggiore*, containing more than 200 woodcuts, was published in 1500. The engravings seem to be by different hands. In the earlier part of the book they are carefully drawn and finished with extreme minuteness, but those in the latter part display haste and slovenliness.⁶

The *Rappresentazioni* were not generally illustrated before 1500, but after that date many of them were embellished with woodcuts,⁷ which appear from their various styles to have emanated from different workshops.⁸ Botticelli's influence is discernible in many of them. Federigo's *Quadriregio*, which was first published, unillustrated, in 1481, was republished in 1508

¹ A beautiful woodcut of S. Jacopone, kneeling before the Madonna, in this work is reproduced by Kristeller, vol. ii. p. 7, and (from a 1491 edition) by Lippmann, p. 23.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

³ A. W. Pollard's *Early Illustrated Books*, pp. 115, 120. Vasari (ii. 235) mentions a tract of Savonarola's, entitled, *Il Triomfo della Fede*, which he says contains the best example of Botticelli's works as an engraver. No copy has ever been found.

⁴ Lippmann, p. 28.

⁵ An English version of this work was printed by Caxton in 1474. It was the third work issued by the Westminster Press.

⁶ Lippmann, pp. 46, 47.

⁷ Pollard's *Early Illustrated Books* (1893), p. 128. ⁸ Lippmann, p. 54.

with charmingly designed and finely executed woodcuts.¹ This book, as well as the *Epistole*, and the *Morgante*, was printed by Piero da Pescia, from whose press hardly any book issued that was not distinguished by taste and good workmanship. The *Quadriregio* was the last illustrated work of much merit produced in Florence.² In the second decade of the sixteenth century Florentine wood-engraving lost much of its originality, and began to repeat itself or to imitate the Venetian style.³ A large number of illustrated works were issued between 1516 and 1546 by Giovanni Benvenuto, who is the only Florentine publisher who invariably signed his woodcuts.⁴ He seems to have made a speciality of the *Rappresentazioni*, and these continued to be issued long after his day.⁵ The blocks originally cut for them were used till they were quite worn out, when they were replaced by new ones. This process of renewal was sometimes repeated three or four times, and as each new block was inferior to its predecessor, the beauty and charm of the original was ultimately lost.⁶

LITERATURE

Early sixteenth-century Florentine literature was of a different character to that of the Laurentian era, and it attained a higher level of excellence. Poetry had given place to prose. Poliziano, Pulci, Lorenzo de' Medici and Benevieni had passed away and left no successors.⁷ Machiavelli and Guicciardini now occupied the field and produced works of more lasting value, one of which, *Il Principe*, has even now a world-wide reputation.

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI (1469-1527) was born in Florence in the year when Lorenzo de' Medici succeeded to the virtual sovereignty of the city. His political career, and the circumstances under which he fell into disgrace, have already been noticed. But for this enforced retirement from public life he would never have made of literature a serious occupation, for though gifted with imagination, his mind was essentially practical

¹ It is said that some of them were designed by Luca Signorelli, but Lippmann questions it. ² *Bibliographica*, ii. 100. ³ *Ibid.*, ii. 229.

⁴ Pollard's *Early Illustrated Books*, p. 129. But ?1511-1546 as given in *Bibliographica*, ii. 98.

⁵ A large number of these were issued anonymously between 1530 and 1580 (Pollard, p. 129). ⁶ Lippmann, p. 54.

⁷ Except perhaps Michelangelo, whose sonnets would hardly have lived but for his fame as an artist.

and his tastes were political. When, in 1513, he found that all chance of his employment by government was at an end, he betook himself to his little villa near San Casciano,¹ and there began the *Discorsi*;² and before the year was out wrote the whole of *Il Principe*. The first work consists of dissertations on Livy's Decades, in which the events there narrated are used as the bases of Machiavelli's political theories. The second is a philosophical essay on Statecraft. These two works must be read together before any just estimate of their author, as a political or ethical thinker, can be formed.³ Looked at solely from an intellectual point of view it is difficult to exaggerate their importance. Plato and Aristotle had formulated their views of an ideal State by a deductive process. Machiavelli approached the subject from a different standpoint, and handled it by a new method. He investigated the conditions under which nations of the past had prospered and decayed, analysed the constitution of their various governments, and evolved the causes which led to their rise and fall. He was indeed the first writer who endeavoured by induction to create out of history a science which should be of use to the politician.

As harbingers of a sound system of speculative politics the Discourses and the Prince were of inestimable value, but judged by present-day standards their ethics must receive unequivocal condemnation. They are vitiated from end to end by the jesuitical doctrine that the end justifies the means. We are met at every turn by such reflections as these. "Where it is an absolute question of the welfare of our country we must admit of no considerations of justice or injustice, of mercy or cruelty, of praise or ignominy."⁴ "It is essential, therefore, for a Prince who desires to maintain his position to have learned how to be other than good, and to use or not use his goodness as necessity requires."⁵ "A prudent Prince neither can nor ought to keep his word when to keep it is hurtful to him."⁶ Nevertheless, Machiavelli himself brands these precepts as "not good," and only advocates their use when the well-being of the State seems to require it.⁷ And in justice to him it must

¹ It is situated about seven miles from Florence on the Roman road.

² The *Discorsi* were not finished till 1521.

³ Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 89; A. J. Symonds, *Ency. Brit.*, xv. 149.

⁴ *Discorsi*, bk. ii. ch. 2. Cited in Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 106.

⁵ "The Prince," translated by Ninian Thomson (1897), p. 110.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126. ⁷ *Discorsi*; Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 174.

be remembered that the doctrines which he promulgated were not the offspring of his own brain. They had been very generally accepted and acted on long before his time by almost every Italian State, whether a republic or a principality.¹ Machiavelli did but embody in a scientific and literary form the political morality of his day. And so his *Discorsi* and *Principe*, apart from their substance, have a value as revealing the mind of the Renaissance politician in all its strength and all its naked deformity.

Il Principe was not printed till 1532, but it had previously obtained a wide circulation in manuscript. Professor Villari claims for it, perhaps somewhat extravagantly, that it has more directly affected real life, and had a larger share in freeing Europe from mediæval bondage, than any book in the world.² However this may be, it is beyond doubt that no work has so steadily held a high place in literature in the teeth of such storms of hostile criticism. It has been attacked by men of every creed and every nation. Jesuits and Huguenots; Italian, English, French, German, and Spanish critics have lifted up their voice against its teaching, and yet its editions and translations have continued to multiply. Nor is it surprising that it should have been vigorously assailed if (as has usually been the case) the book is judged apart from Machiavelli's other writings, and the circumstances from which it sprang are left out of account. So regarded it has all the appearance of a *vade mecum* for tyrants, counselling them how and when they should resort to craft or violence for the purpose of enslaving their subjects. And yet Machiavelli's sympathies were republican and he realised the evils of despotism. "Unlimited and unrestrained power is always hurtful; for even when the people are not corrupted they speedily become so," he wrote in his *Discorsi*.³ Had "The Prince" been an academic essay we should without doubt have had a system of government propounded nearer akin to Plato's Republic or More's Utopia. But it was written with a practical and very noble object,⁴ and its divergence from Machiavelli's ideals was caused by the deplorable condition of his country, to

¹ Emphatically by Venice, and often by Florence. The Florentine Bernardo del Nero expressly approved of them (Villari's *Machiavelli*, ii. 81).

² *Ibid.*, ii. 184.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 122.

⁴ The base accusation that it was written to curry favour with the Medici has been effectually refuted by Professor Villari. See his *Life of Machiavelli*, ii. 159.

relieve which he did not scruple to throw theory and principle to the winds. Italy was trampled on by French and Spanish soldiers, torn asunder by intestine feuds, enervated and morally corrupt. The disease was deep-seated, widespread, and replete with complications. It required a drastic remedy, and Machiavelli offered a very daring one. His prescription may have been poison, but there are cases where poison, cautiously administered, is the only cure. What he offered was the outcome of a strangely constituted mind. Subtlety and sincerity, overweening patriotism, disbelief in moral progress and relentless logic had equal shares in its production.

Unlike as Dante and Machiavelli are in character, and dissimilar as the *De Monarchia* is from *Il Principe*, the two men were dominated by the same spirit, and their two works were written for the same end. Both were patriots before all things. Both dreamed of a united Italy, and both believed that their dream could only be realised by the rule of a single individual. But here the parallel ends. Dante (like Savonarola at a later date) looked for a heaven-sent vicegerent who was to establish a divinely appointed order. Machiavelli sought a prince whose sole title to rule rested on his own sagacity, and whose methods of government were to be judged by no other standard than success. It was the logic of facts which led Machiavelli to build his hopes for the salvation of his country on such a mundane foundation. The examples of Henry VII. and Charles VIII. were doubtless before his eyes when he wrote, "Although more than once we have beheld someone affording us a gleam of hope that he had a mission from God to redeem our country, yet he was ever repulsed by fortune, so Italy still awaits him who is to come to heal her wounds."¹ And events which he had himself witnessed may have taught him the futility of an appeal to the higher instincts of humanity. Was a prince likely to succeed in a dangerous enterprise who relied upon religious fervour and based his authority on the love and affection of his subjects? Savonarola's fate negated any such belief. Or would he be more likely to attain his end by a prudent recourse to force and fraud? Cesare Borgia had tried this method, and but for his father's premature death it looked as if he would have succeeded. Such were the lessons which Machiavelli learned from history and endeavoured to turn to account. Possibly he would not have

¹ *Il Principe*, ch. xxv.

accepted conclusions so directly at variance with morality, but for his patriotism which seems to have been abnormally developed. He had an unbounded admiration for those who loved their country more than the safety of their own souls, and every sin and every crime were pardonable in his eyes if committed for the good of the body politic. This is at least some justification for the man, although it hardly touches the ethics of his teaching. But his teaching has been repeatedly misunderstood, and his name, like that of Epicurus, has been identified with doctrines which he would have repudiated.

Of Machiavelli's other prose works his *History of Florence* stands next in importance. It is not the fruit of original research, nor is it an orderly chronicle of events (indeed, it is not always accurate) but it is a masterpiece of literary art.¹ It is a vivid picture of the life of the Florentine Republic drawn with simplicity and vigour. It charms in the same way as Froude's historical writings charm. But it is something more than a piece of brilliant writing. Machiavelli subjects Florentine affairs to the same kind of analysis, as in his *Discorsi*, he had subjected those of Rome. He traces the growth of national institutions and examines their weakness and their strength. Such work, he tells us, he considers of more importance than accounts of battles and sieges. His *Istorie Fiorentine* was the first work of its kind in which "drum and trumpet history" was relegated to a second place, and it may fairly be considered as the precursor of such works as Green's *Short History of the English People*. The *Arte di Guerra* and the *Vita di Castruccio* were completed in 1520. The former was written, like *Il Principe*, with the laudable object of teaching Italy how she might free herself from foreign enslavement; the latter must be regarded rather as a romance than a biography. In the previous year he had, at the request of Leo X., written a short treatise on the reorganisation of the Florentine constitution, in which he urged the Pope to grant self-government to his native city.² His love of free institutions is very evident from this work. Saturated though Machiavelli's mind was with Renaissance modes of thought, the style of his prose works is altogether free from Renaissance mannerisms. There is a simplicity and directness about his writing that is very refreshing after reading the turgid sentences of the humanists. He tells us that he dislikes "rounded periods," and prefers that

¹ Symonds, i. 303. ² *Discorso sopra il Riformar lo Stato di Firenze.*

his work should stand or fall by its truth and importance, unaided by artifice.¹ Machiavelli also wrote poems, sonnets, *capitoli*, *Carnascialeschi*, a short novel (*Belfagor*), and at least two dramas. The longer and more important of these, *Mandragola*, is a very powerful production, but its plot is repulsive.² Its indelicacy did not, however, offend the tastes of the day, for it was acted before the Pope. *Clizia*, Machiavelli's other comedy, is a slighter but more pleasing work.³ Machiavelli's literary career was cut short by his return to public life in 1525. He died in 1527.

FRANCESCO GUICCIARDINI (1483-1540) was one of the greatest historians of his own or any other age. Whether in intellectual capacity he was inferior even to Machiavelli may well be questioned, but there can be no question that he is a less attractive personality. He had not Machiavelli's imagination or enthusiasm, and he was more ready to subordinate patriotism to self-interest. He served three popes with conspicuous ability, and did all that in him lay to strengthen the temporal power of the Church; and yet he unblushingly admits that, but for his own advantage, he would have become a Lutheran, if by so doing he could have seen the priests (whom he calls a pack of scoundrels) "purged of their vices or stripped of their authority."⁴ He carried out, with ruthless severity, the perfidious instructions of his master, Clement VII., for the punishment of his fellow-citizens after the fall of Florence in 1530; he pleaded successfully the cause of Alessandro de' Medici (the worst of his race) at Naples before Charles V.; he offered his services to Duke Cosimo I.; and yet he wrote that he hoped to see a republic re-established in Florence before his death.⁵

It must have been during his political life, either when he was an emissary at the Spanish Court (1512-1515), or governor of Reggio, Modena, Parma, or Bologna (1515-1530), that he wrote most of the works which were printed for the first time in 1857, under the title of *Opere Inedite di Francesco Guicciardini*.⁶ Their publication has enhanced their author's literary reputation, but it has done much to substantiate the unfavourable estimate which had been formed of his character. They comprise Reflections on Political and Civil Affairs, a History of Florence, a critical exami-

¹ See his dedicatory letter in *Il Principe*.

² Symonds, v. 165-172.

³ *Ibid.*, 161-164.

⁴ *Ricordi*, No. 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 236.

⁶ These works run to ten volumes, and were edited by Signor Canestrini.

nation of Machiavelli's political theories, a Dialogue on the Florentine Constitution, and Essays, chiefly on politics. The *Ricordi*¹ have been described by a countryman of Guicciardini's as "Italian corruption codified and elevated to a rule of life."² His *Storia Fiorentina* treats of the period between 1378 and 1509. It was one of his earliest works, and it was written with greater simplicity and animation than his History of Italy.

The commentary on Machiavelli's *Discorsi* has a peculiar interest, as it brings into juxtaposition the political views of the two greatest thinkers of their day. Guicciardini was more patient in investigating facts, more cautious in arriving at conclusions, less visionary than Machiavelli, and his judgments are consequently sounder,³ but there is a cynical indifference to the woes of his country manifest in his writings, which is never found in those which he is criticising. His mental horizon was narrower and his sense of perspective less true than Machiavelli's, so his works do not reach the same artistic level. Guicciardini's fame as a writer rests, however, on his History of Italy, but as it was written between 1534 and 1540, after his retirement from public life, it does not belong to the period under review.

MICHELANGELO was a poet of a very different order to Machiavelli. His extant poems comprise seventy-seven sonnets, all more or less serious in tone, of which a few were probably written before 1530, but most of them belong to a later date. They are prized, perhaps more highly than they would otherwise have been, on account of the glory reflected on them from the Dome of S. Peter's, the Sistine frescoes, and the Medici tombs. They are other than we should naturally expect from the hand of the mighty artist, for they are generally defective in workmanship. He had not the same command over his pen as over his chisel or his brush, and his verses are often obscure and crabbed, harsh, and ungrammatical. They were jotted down on the first scrap of paper which came to hand, sometimes on the corner of a sketch, whenever a rhythmical thought requiring expression arose. They were but seldom revised or corrected, as they were not intended for publication. Thus we get the spontaneous workings of a mind which was at once abnormally sensitive, vigorous, and

¹ They have been admirably translated by Mr. Ninian Thomson under the title of *Counsels and Reflections of Francesco Guicciardini*, London, 1890.

² *Ency. Brit.*, xi. 256.

³ Such was the opinion of Count Cavour and Gino Capponi (*Villari's Machiavelli*, ii. 152, note).

original, revealed to us. Michelangelo's sonnets may be inartistic in form, but they achieve the object at which Art should always aim—they arrest the fleeting, perpetuate the transitory. They express, almost exclusively, thoughts and feelings occasioned by Love (chastened and spiritualised), Art, and Religion. Some of the most beautiful were addressed to Vittoria Colonna, whose friendship brightened the later years of their author's life, and who had aroused in him an admiration akin to worship.

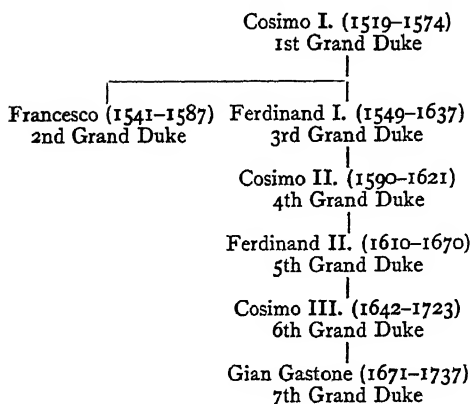
Renaissance Poetry, like Renaissance Art, closes with Michelangelo. The triumph-song and death-knell of Art were both sounded by him, but it was not so with Poetry. No share in the collapse of Italian Literature can be imputed to him. His writings show no trace of the superfluity of artifice or flaccid mannerism which characterises the work of the post-humanists. They have all the ruggedness and vigour of youthful immaturity. Still, when Michelangelo died the Muse ceased to sing, and was heard no more in Florence until Filicaia, Menzini, and Reddi broke the silence of a hundred years.

CONCLUSION

AFTER capitulating to Clement VII. and his allies, in 1530, Florence sank into obscurity. It is outside the scope of this work to trace her subsequent history, but it may be useful to indicate it in the merest outline. She suffered much under the rule of the later Medici, most of whom were worthless, and some of whose biographies might be chapters from a Newgate Calendar. Duke Alessandro's vicious life scandalised even his own associates and made him universally detested. In 1535 his cousin Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici died from poison, which there are good grounds for believing was administered by his order. On January 5th, 1537, he was murdered by his relative Lorenzino, and the sovereignty of Florence passed from the elder to the younger branch of Giovanni de' Medici's family. Cosimo I., the son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, became virtual monarch of Florence, and ruled under the title of Duke of Florence till 1570, when, after he had subjugated Siena, he was created Grand Duke of Tuscany by Pope Gregory XIII. He was an able administrator, but he maintained his position rather by fear than love. He is suspected of having murdered two of his sons and one of his daughters. His son Francesco having caused the husband of the beautiful Bianca Capella to be assassinated, married her, and it is generally supposed that he and his wife, who died on the same day, were poisoned by his brother Ferdinand.¹ On the death of the seventh Grand Duke, Gian Gastone, the Medicean dynasty came to an end.

¹ This story is disbelieved by Signor Saltini. See his *Tragedie Medicee Domestiche* (Firenze, 1898).

MEDICI PEDIGREE. (TABLE VI.)



The Grand Duchy of Tuscany was held by the house of Lorraine from 1737 to 1796, when Italy was conquered by Napoleon; in 1801 it was merged in the kingdom of Etruria, and in 1807 it became a province of France. In 1814 it reverted to the representatives of the house of Lorraine, the Hapsburgs, who were then the reigning family of Austria, in whose hands it remained until the abdication of Leopold, the eleventh Grand Duke, in 1859. In the following year Victor Emmanuel entered Florence, and in 1865 he constituted it the capital of Italy. It only held this proud position, however, for five years, as in 1870, after having acquired the Papal States, the king removed the seat of government to Rome.

Many an empire has come and gone and left behind it a less interesting history than that of the little republic of Florence. It appeals to two classes of students. It has a peculiar charm for those who take a dramatic, as well as for those who take a scientific, interest in history—for those who love to watch the actions of strong personalities, no less than for those who delight to trace the growth of political institutions and to analyse the principles on which they were founded. The annals of a State which produced a Dante and a Petrarch, an Arnolfo and a Giotto, a Cosimo and a Lorenzo de' Medici, a Boccaccio and a Machiavelli, a Donatello and a Michaelangelo, must needs be fascinating; and those of one which experimented in every form

of government, from an absolute despotism to an undiluted ochlocracy, must needs be deserving of study.

And yet the story of Florence, in spite of her brilliant artistic and literary triumphs, is a sad one. It is the story of intellectual success and of moral failure; of noble ideals unrealised; and of an unceasing struggle for freedom without the qualities essential for its existence. There was a grasping egoism about the Florentine character which was ineradicable. Each citizen desired ascendancy over his neighbours in some form or other; if not for himself individually then for the family, the clique, or the class to which he belonged. Hence the rivalries, feuds, factions, and conspiracies which wrecked successive governments. Five hundred years' experience was not sufficient to teach the Florentines that in every well-ordered social system some measure of self-effacement is necessary. Nor could they learn it from Religion or Philosophy. Savonarola insisted on it with impassioned eloquence, and his teaching engendered not self-sacrifice but fanaticism. The writings of the great Greek and Roman thinkers were read with an almost superstitious reverence, and yet the fruit they bore was not increased self-control but an admiration for tyrannicide.

This struggle between Individualism and Collectivism, common to almost every nation at some period or other of its history, was in Florence never-ending. The battle is generally fought and won once for all, and the individual learns his proper place in the community, but in Florence the forces were too evenly balanced for any such result. There Individualism struggled so fiercely and so long for expression that it at length made Collectivism impossible. It is the gradual extinction of public spirit—the slow deterioration of national character—the sapping of an energy which was once felt all over the civilised world, under the continuous pressure of "Pride, Hate, Greed, and Ambition" that tinges with melancholy the later pages of Florentine history.

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